

FOURTEEN
SERMONS,
PREACHED

On several
OCCASIONS.

Never before Printed.

By *Nich. Brady*, D. D. Minister of *Richmond* in *Surry* ; and Chaplain in Ordinary to her Majesty.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *John Chantry*, at the *Pestle*
and *Mortar* without *Temple-Bar*. 1704.

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PREACHED

ON

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By Wm. Henry D.D. Minister of Rye,
and Chaplain in Ordinary to her Majesty

Printed for John Church, at the Bible
and Mortar without Temple-Bar

1746

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TO THE
Most Reverend Father in God
JOHN
Lord Arch-Bishop of YORK;
Primate and Metropolitan
OF
ENGLAND,
AND
Lord Almoner
TO HER
MAJESTY.

THese following Discourses
are most Humbly Dedicat-
ed by his Grace's most Obedi-
ent and most Obliged Humble
Servant

N. Brady.



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2 Cor. X. Chapter, latter
part of the 5. Verse.

And bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Religion, which under the *Jewish* Oeconomy seemed to have taken a *Body* upon her, and gave way to Conceptions that were gross and *Carnal*, is under the *Christian* dispensation all *Soul* and *Spirit*, and supported by such Notions as are abstracted and sublime: Her Empire formerly seemed to be only *outward*, and to extend no farther than to the *words* and *actions*; whereas now she asserts an *inward* Jurisdiction, influencing the very thoughts and imaginations of the

B Heart.

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Heart. This, though her undoubted and indisputable Prerogative, is looked upon by too many as an unjust usurpation; and they would willingly see her confined again within her former limits, not suffered to encroach upon the native liberty of their minds, but allowing them a licence to *think* as they please, without any danger or restraint: Hence it is, that the generality of Men think themselves safe enough, if they do but abstain from enormous *Commissions*; and if they so far *take heed to their ways*, as that *they offend not with their tongues*, if their words are regulated as duly as their actions, they then imagine they have nothing more to do, they have attained to the utmost height of Purity and Perfection: Not considering, that *humane* Laws can thus far oblige; and that it is the peculiar and incommunicable Prerogative of the *Deity*, to exercise a dominion over our *affections* and *desires*, and to govern in the innermost *recesses* of our *Souls*: God, we know, is the *great discerner of all hearts*, he sees the most secret transactions of our minds, and every imperfect motion of them is *naked and open*

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open, unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do ; nor is he a bare spectator of them, out of a useless curiosity and unprofitable inquisitiveness, but tries them and examines them, judges them and weighs them ; and therefore he that would approve himself in his sight, must curb and subdue his inward lusts, as well as mortifie his outward members ; must keep himself free from loose imaginations, as well as refrain from scandalous pollutions ; regulating his affections as carefully as his actions, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

In my following Discourse upon which words I shall insist upon these four particulars.

1. I shall consider, the natural licentiousness and uncontrollableness of our Thoughts.

2. I shall shew the great inconvenience, of suffering them to continue thus loose and unbridled.

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3. I

3. I shall enquire into the vast advantages, of laying upon them a becoming restraint, and *bringing them into captivity to the obedience of Christ.* And,

4. I shall lay down some rules and directions, by which we may be enabled to govern them as we ought, and to curb the natural extravagancy of them.

1. Then I shall consider, the natural licentiousness and uncontroulableness of our thoughts.

The thoughts of Men, have a comprehensiveness and activity, that is next to infinite; and *Reason*, which was designed to moderate and restrain them, in the corrupt condition to which the *Fall* has reduced it, is not able of it self to keep pace with them: *That* must deliberate and compare things together, before it is able to pass judgment upon them, either to approve them or condemn them; & whilst a process of this nature is leisurely going on, the restless imagination has shifted

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ted the Scene, the circumstances are varied, the case is altered, and the understanding has a new business to censure and arraign : Thus for instance, if the fancy is full fraught with *lustful* desires, and the bias of the Thoughts seem to lean *that* way ; Reason perhaps may presently take the alarm, and prepare to combat them with a force not to be resisted ; but before these strong *batteries* can be brought to play against them, the roving fancy has varied its employment, it is panting after the enjoyment of *Riches* or of *Honour*, and filled with new Ideas of *Covetousness* or *Ambition* : And then other methods must be taken to restrain them ; which they can again elude as easily as the former, by the benefit of a motion so sudden and surprizing. For the proof of this assertion, which needs no other Evidence, I appeal to the experience of all who now hear me : Are not our thoughts sometimes wandering and unsettled, in the most serious entertainments of Piety and Devotion ? Do not loose imaginations unaccountably insinuate themselves, under our nearest and most solemn approaches

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proaches to God, whether in the *Church* or at the *Altar*? And when a religious *care* has detected and condemned them, do they not insensibly vanish and disappear for a time, and as soon as the search and scrutiny is over, return again to amuse the mind, and make it less attentive to its devout employment? I will not question but that all who compose this Congregation, came hither with intentions solemn and serious; suitable to the gravity of the present occasion, and to the venerableness of those offices in which we are employed; and yet, if we would examine our selves strictly and impartially, I fear we cannot justify the motions of our minds, even for that short time that we have been together; that our *words* and our *affections* have been sometimes separated; and whilst the *former* of them have been *directed* towards *Heaven*, the latter have been *divided* between the *World* and the *Flesh*; unhappily verifying the Prophet's charge, that *we draw near to God with our lips, and honour him with our mouths, whilst in our hearts we go far from him*: and now if they are thus able to distract and disturb us, in the most

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most *awful exercises* of *Piety* and *Religion* ; how much more successful are their attempts like to be, when *they* take the Soul naked and *unregarded*, at the looser hours of *pleasure* and *diversion* ? Then every sinful thought meets with an easie admission ; and no sooner does it play upon the surface of the Soul . but the corrupt *Will* closes with it and embraces it, the vitiated *Understanding* approves of it and abets it, the depraved *Memory* treasures it up and retains it, and all the *faculties* of the Soul comply with it readily, unless *Grace* and *Religion* be upon the watch to oppose it : For how indeed, without such *forreign* assistances as these, shall a Man be able to resist *Himself*, to combate the motions of his *own mind*, and to wrestle and contend with those very imaginations, which his *own heart* suggests unto him ? and that especially when they are so well able to *vary* their shapes, and take upon them *any appearance*, which may most pleasingly accommodate it self, to our *present* Frame and Constitution ? and when they are withall so *quick* and *slippery*, that it is impossible to lay hold upon them, to bring to the bar of

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Reason or *Conscience*, and they never stay long enough to be apprehended, unless they find themselves entertained with *complacency* and *satisfaction*? The difficulty of restraining them being then so *very* great, few People would be persuaded to give themselves the trouble of it, were not the consequences of their looseness exceeding fatal, and the dangers which flow from it extremely great. I therefore proceed

2dly, To shew the great inconvenience of letting our thoughts continue thus loose and unbridled.

Scarce any are so nice in matters of *Religion*, however curious they may be in *other* concernments, as to disturb themselves much about what passes *within* them, if all things appear fairly to the *Eyes* of the *World*: sinful *Commissions* and unbecoming *Expressions* cry aloud, in the Offence they give, or the Injustice which they do; and therefore *these* are not usually practised by any, but such as are *avowedly* prophane and irreligious; whilst idle *Thoughts* and loose *Imaginations*, are frequently connived at by the *best* amongst us; we foolishly

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foolishly mistake them, for harmless
Entertainments and innocent Amuze-
ments, because they do not presently
break out into actual transgression,
but seduce silently without noise or
scandal : But since our Saviour posi-
tively assures us, that *those things which*
proceed out of the Man defile the Man ;
and that out of the Heart proceed evil
thoughts ; since we are informed in re-
lation to the Old World, that *it repent-*
ed God that he had made Man upon the
Earth, because every imagination of the
thoughts of his Heart was only evil conti-
nually ; since by our great Law-giver,
the guilt of Murther is annexed to be-
ing Angry, the guilt of Adultery is af-
fixed to lustful Desires ; and what was
formerly only penal in the Commission,
is now punishable in the bare Intention,
it therefore stands us upon, *above all*
keepings to keep the Heart, to regulate the
Thoughts and Affections of that, be-
cause *out of it are the issues both of Life*
and Death. For indeed how speedy and
how natural is the progress, from wick-
ed Thoughts to sinful Actions ! and how
few are there who indulge the former,
that are not led on insensibly to com-
mit the latter ! From thinking as we
ought

ought not, we easily proceed to *approve* what we should not ; and it is but one step more from *approving* to *practicing* : Thus sinful *Imaginations*, however trivial they may appear, will if they are indulged infallibly conduct us, to the grossest and most scandalous *actual transgressions*. For nothing can lay a restraint upon the *Actions* of that Man, who pleases himself with *Thoughts* that are wicked and impure, but the bare consideration of his Credit and Reputation, and his being desirous to recommend himself to the good Opinion of Men ; and whenever that curb is taken off, when he can either transgress *privately*, or amongst such who look upon Sin to be *fashionable* and *gentile* ; he will *act* as impiously, as he *thought* sinfully, his *practices* will be as vile as his *imaginations* were evil, since his *inward* Judgment has declared already in their favour, and there appears nothing from *without* to hinder or withhold him. But as the wickedness of the *Thoughts* does thus influence the actions, and regulate them according to their own corrupt Standard ; so, when the *Body* is disabled by Age or Infirmary, and not capable of executing what

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II

what they dictate and advise ; this iniquity of the *Mind* may be *vigorous* and *lively*, and Sin may in *that* be still *active* and *powerful* : The *Bed-rid Sinner*, whose *Senses* can no longer minister to his Impieties, and who has lost the taste of all *Bodily enjoyments* ; may yet chew the Cud upon his former *Carnal Pleasures*, may act the sinful Scene over again in his *corrupt Imaginations*, and may heap upon himself fresh *guilt* and *vengeance*, when he is able to do no more but *think* wickedly : Nor is the iniquity of the thoughts more *lasting* only, but of a greater *extent* also than that of the actions ; they are not circumscribed within any limit, but the Sphere of their Activity is as large as Nature, and has no other bounds but those of the Universe : Thus for instance, if the *furious* person have an Enemy in the *Indies*, though he cannot dip his *Hands* in his Adversaries Blood, yet his thoughts may assassinate him at that distance, and he is conscious of a *Murder* though the Man *lives* still : If the *lascivious Epicure* has a *wanton Mistress* in the *farthest* parts of the Earth, though he cannot *actually* pollute his *Neighbours Bed*, yet may he contract

tract the guilt of *Adultery* by sensual *thoughts* and lustful *desires*: If the *ambitious* Man, cannot *reach* his Rival in greatness or in power, yet may he incur the blame of a *false Witness*, by *wishing* him supplanted unjustly and indirectly: Thus may every particular Sinner, when *actual* wickedness cannot be committed by him, become guilty however by his *designs* and *intentions*, and expose himself thereby to a proportionable Punishment. But if the thoughts had no manner of efficacy upon the *actions*, if the workings of the *Mind* were as narrow and as much limited as those of the *Body*, yet the leaving them ungoverned will appear sufficiently inconvenient; if we consider that these are they which God particularly regards, by which we are especially recommended to his favour, or made eminently liable to his displeasure; for he will never accept what the Heathen *Deities* rejected with disdain, a *Sacrifice without a Heart*; nor will he take any delight in the abstinence of the *Body*, when the *Soul* is panting after sensual Enjoyments: God is very exact in respect of these Operations, which are peculiar to us as

we are *rational Creatures*; and since he has not required of us, a *sensitive* only but a *reasonable Service*, he will expect to be obeyed by the *Man* within us, and revered in the *affections* and *faculties* of our *Soul*. These then are the dangers and inconveniences of suffering our thoughts to continue loose and unbridled; they will lead us to the Commission of all *actual* transgressions; they will still be *enhancing* our guilt and punishment, when we are not able to offend any otherwise; and they chiefly expose us to the anger of our God, who requires *truth in the inward parts*: And here I desire I may not be mistaken throughout the whole current of this Discourse; as if I thought *every evil imagination*, which oftentimes is only a *suggestion* of the *Devil*, exposed a Man to this unhappy censure and condition; no, that were to condemn a *Temptation* as a *Sin*; since the best Men with their utmost care, cannot always be secure against such infirmities; but those thoughts upon which I fix so black a Character, and which I declare to be so dangerous; are those which proceed from the corruption of our Nature, and are entertained

tained by us with delight and satisfaction : for there is as much difference between these and others, as there is between the Case of one Citizen, who has his House set on Fire by the malice of his Enemy ; and that of another, who kindles the Flames that consume his Dwelling, and heaps on fresh Fuel to encrease the Conflagration. But as we find the *disadvantages* on this side to be very considerable ; So

3dly, Let us enquire into the great *advantages*, of laying upon our thoughts a becoming restraint, and *bringing them into captivity to the obedience of Christ*.

This was one great design, of our blessed Saviour's coming into the World ; to purge away that corrupt Opinion which began then to take such sure footing ; namely, that an *external* Conformity to the Divine Prescriptions, was the *whole* business of a *Religious* Life ; and that an *out-side* of Devotion was *all* that was required at our Hands, without the necessary concurrence of *inward* purity : Such was the reputed Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ; but *our Righteousness*
(we

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(we are told) *must exceed theirs, if we expect to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; we must therefore super add good *intentions* to our good *actions*, the cleansing of the *Heart* to the washing of the *Body*, pious *resolutions* to virtuous *performances*. For though the *Jews* might easily be mistaken in this particular, because *temporal* advantages and inconveniences were laid down in *their Law*, as the reward of virtue, and the punishment of evil doers; and they might therefore probably be induced, to suit their Devotions to their rewards and punishments, and consequently to take up with a *superficial Religion*: yet since our Saviour came purposely into the World, to abolish this sort of pageant Worship; since the Gospel in its precepts, its promises, and its threatenings, addresses to the *Soul* and *Spirit* rather than to the *Body*; a *Christian* therefore that should run into the same error, would be wholly inexcusable. For *our Religion*, has sublimated and exalted to a higher degree of perfection, all the injunctions of the *Mosaical Law*; placing upon us an obligation beyond the bare *actions*, and influencing the very *thoughts* and *faculties* of the *Soul*:
Faith

Faith (we know) is the great *Basis* and *Ground-work* of our profession, and this is not seated in the *Tongue* but in the *Heart*; for tho' with the *Mouth Confession* is made unto *Salvation*, yet with the *Heart* it is that *Man believeth unto Righteousness*: He therefore that curbs his unruly imaginations, is the *Man* that complies best with the gracious design, of our *Saviours* coming into this *World*; and is the most cordial embracer of that *Word of God*, which is a *discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the Heart*: For how shall he dare to commit an ill *action*, who will not so much as entertain an evil *imagination*? How shall he knock his *Neighbour* on the *Head*; that dares not so much as be *angry* with him? How shall he *defile* the *Wife* of his *Bosom*, that dares not indulge a *wanton desire*? How shall he *rob* or *defraud* his *Brother* that dares not even covet or wish for what he has? If the *Fountain* be kept pure, the *Streams* will run clear; and he that is startled at such an offence, as is *silent* and *undiscernable*; will not without the greatest difficulty be tempted, to the *Commission* of one that is *gross* and *open*. But as this will make our *Lives* all of a piece,

piece, and the whole Series of them to be pious and unblameable; so will it chiefly recommend us to the favour of our God, who values more the obedience of the *Mind*, than the greatest respect and submission of the *Body*. For, many things may oblige us to be regular in our *actions*, and to manage our *outward* behaviour with decency and discretion; but nothing can persuade us to lay a restraint upon our *thoughts*, but a true awe and reverence for the *Divine Majesty*: The severity of *Human* Laws, may frighten and deter us, from the Commission of such enormities as are *scandalous* and *notorious*; our desire of *credit* and *reputation* in the World, may induce us to avoid whatever is *infamous* and *shameful*; and the consideration of our *interest* and *advancement*, may make us aim industriously at the fame of *probity*, and to settle an Opinion of our *Honesty* and *Sobriety*: but unless *Religion* be the main Spring that moves us, unless *that* be the chief principle of all our acting; God will turn us over for our *Wages*, to those for whose sake we have performed the *Work*, and will tell us, *that verily we have already received our reward*: But he

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that

that sets bounds to the extravagancy of his *thoughts*, can have no such by-ends to promote as these; he is not awed into this carefulness, by any severity of *Human Laws*, since they can take no cognizance of his *imaginations*, which are only tryable at the *Bar of Conscience*; he is not set about this important task, by the empty desire of *popular Applause*, since Men cannot read the *secrets* of the *Heart*, or pass any censure upon the *motions* of *that*; he is not spurred on by any *wordly interest*, since *this* Affair is only transacted between God and his own *Soul*; and therefore he can have no other motive to it, but a profound reverence for that *God that sees in secret*, and a respectful deference to the *Commands* of his *Creatour*; and therefore *God who sees in secret*, will not fail to reward such a Man *openly*, before an innumerable Company of Men and Angels, before the whole *Theatre of Heaven and Earth*. Upon this Account it is, that he is said to accept of a *willing Mind*; not that he dispences with the obedience of our *actions*, since he expects *them* too when they are capable of being performed; but when we are disabled from doing what

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what we should, if our *Heart* is right and our desires well directed, *God* will then, as we speak usually, accept the *will* for the *deed*, because they are our *intentions*, that set a value upon our *performances*, and make them well pleasing and acceptable in his sight. These then are the conveniencies and advantages of *bringing our thoughts into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ*, the recommending of us to the *World*, by the unblameableness of our *actions*, which will always be inoffensive if the thoughts are pure; and the approving of us to *God* by the sincerity of our *Hearts*, of which *he* is the peculiar examiner and inspector. Thus by securing us, from *Prophaneness* on the one side, and *Hypocrisy* on the other, it will entitle us to the priviledges of *both Worlds*, and make us *encrease in favour both with God and Man*. Since therefore our *thoughts* are naturally so licentious, that they cannot be well governed without extraordinary application; and yet since the *inconveniences* of their continuing *unrestrained* are very great, and the *advantages* of *restraining* them are equally considerable; it will be a very useful labour to enquire,

by what means and methods we may attain to this great end, and may *bring into Captivity every thought to the Obedience of Christ*. I proceed therefore to the consideration of my

4th And last Proposition, Namely to lay down some Rules and Directions, by which we may be able to govern our thoughts as we ought, and to curb the natural extravagancy of them.

To *reduce and reclaim* things so wild and *unmanageable* ; to *fetter and bring into Captivity*, things naturally so free and *unconfined* ; to let none escape of so numerous a Company, but to tame the extravagance of every thought ; to make those *obedient*, which are so *stubborn and refractory* ; and *obedient to Christ*, whose Laws are so *opposite* to their *liberty and range* ; this seems an undertaking so difficult and toilsome, that upon the contemplation of it we may be tempted to cry out, *Who is sufficient for these things* ? But, God be praised, this work tho' difficult is not impossible ; *we can do all things through Christ* who has enabled us : and neither the *number* nor the *headiness* of our imaginations, should
frighten

frighten or discourage us from endeavouring to restrain them ; since we may *bring into Captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*, if we will but make use of the following method.

1. In order to the attainment of this end, we must fix in our Minds an immoveable assurance, that God is *Omni-scient* and *Omnipresent*.

He that has any reverence for so pure a Being, whose Eyes will not behold the thing that is unclean ; and is at the same effectually convinced, that there is not a *thought in all his Heart*, but that God knows it altogether ; will probably be persuaded so to regulate his *thoughts*, as that they may not be offensive to the Eyes, of so holy and so curious an *inspector* : For how shall he dare to expose such things to *his* view, as he would blush to have known or understood by one of his *sinful Fellow-Creatures* ? and yet I appeal to the Conscience of every Man, whether they would not be covered with confusion of Face, if their most intimate Companions were acquainted with those *thoughts*, which sometimes interfere

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with their most *serious entertainments*: Now God is a *discerner of every one of these*, he understands our thoughts long before; and how then shall we dare to abide in his presence, without curbing and restraining those loose imaginations, and bringing them into captivity to the obedience of Christ. But,

2. In order to the compassing of this end, let us always fix our thoughts upon some *worthy Object*, and give them such an entertainment as is *commendable and beneficial*.

The Soul of Man is made up of such active principles, that it can never subsist in a cold *indifferency*, but must employ its *busy* faculties one way or other; we are all of us *thinking Creatures*; this qualification is inherent in our Nature; if therefore we would not have our Minds possessed, with such *loose imaginations* as may debauch and corrupt them; we must take care to supply them with *such reflections*, as may be improving and advantageous: The *purity* of the *divine Nature* and the *corruptions* of our own, with the means and methods of imitating the former, and

and reforming the *latter*, and whatever tends to this immediately or remotely, should be our constant useful Meditations ; and we must be sure to provide our selves of such *innocent entertainments*, if we would not have our thoughts launch out into those that are *otherwise* : Reason is not so far corrupted or depraved, but that it will yet close with what is truly desirable, if it be proposed to it's choice and acceptance ; but when no provision is made of this kind, the *busy Fancy* will be its own *Carver*, and rather than be *idle* it will be *ill-employ'd*. The fixing therefore upon a *deserving Object*, will be another effectual means to regulate our thoughts, and to *bring them in- to captivity to the obedience of Christ*. But,

3ly. In pursuance of this great end, let us keep a strict *watch* over all our *Senses*.

These are the avenues and inlets to the Soul, by which all *external wordly Objects* influence the *Thoughts* and *Affections* of the Heart ; they are the *channels* and *conveyances*, by which a

commerce is kept up between the *World* and *that* : and therefore, if a strict guard be kept upon *them*, and nothing suffered to pass through them, but what is innocent and inoffensive ; the Garrison can never be corrupted, and Sin will never gain a party within us : But if *these* are allowed to give passage promiscuously, and to let in upon us the vanities and allurements of the *World*, they will easily affect our *light imaginations* ; and the wheels of our thoughts are so flippant and slippery, that they will soon be set a going by them ; and therefore we must take especial care, that our *Eyes* convey no Objects to the Mind, that may minister to our *Lust*, our *Covetousness*, or *Ambition* ; we must take great heed, that our *Ears* be not open to the *Songs* of the *Siren*, to *loose and effeminating entertainments* ; but must use them both as the instruments of instruction and manly information ; making them perform the Office of *Intelligencers*, to give us a true State of *Foreign Affairs*, as far as they are *useful and improving* ! but never letting them play the *Traytors* or the *Spies*, to give notice of our *weakness* to our *Enemies*, and afford them

them an opportunity of breaking in upon us. Thus may they be serviceable to the governing of our thoughts, and *bringing them into captivity to the obedience of Christ*. But,

4^{thly} and Lastly, In order to the attainment of this end, let us be fervent in *prayer and supplication*.

God only, who gave us the *power to think*, is able to restrain and regulate our *thoughts*; and he, who is the Judge and Discerner of them, can alone set bounds and measures to them; and therefore we must at all times have recourse to *him*, and he will not fail to enable us to confine them. Let them be never so *wild* or so *extravagant*, let them be never so *headstrong* or so *numerous*; God, who can still the raging of the Sea, can also rule this madness of the People: and all those loose imaginations, which are so very ungovernable by us, when we depend upon *our own* skill and strength to manage them; will easily be reduced under the Dominion of *Grace*, when we have implored and obtained the assistance of the *Almighty*: If we *wrestle* with God and
pre-

prevail with him, what shall be able to oppose us afterwards ? The Spirit of God will then influence our Souls, and as in the Creation, will move upon the Face of those troubled Waters ; producing Order and perfect Harmony, out of that rude Chaos of Discord and Confusion. Prayer is the most certain and effectual means, for drawing down upon us whatsoever Blessings ; but is then most necessary and indispensable, when the Mercies we implore are of such a Nature, that the cognizance of them belongs peculiarly to God, and are solely and entirely in his disposal ; such is the Petition of which we are now speaking, the Government of our thoughts and unruly desires ; God alone can make them tractable, and there is none besides him ; to him therefore must we apply our selves for help, to his Footstool must we fly for succour and assistance. But let us not imagine, that this is all we need to do, and that our own endeavours may be superseded ; the Clown in the Fable whose Cart stuck in the Mire, when he prayed to Hercules to pluck it out, was commanded to set his own Shoulder to it ; and so must we do if we expect to succeed ;
since

since most certain it is, that God will never *encourage* us in our *laziness*, but only *assist* us in our *diligence* and *industry*. This manner therefore of addressing unto God, will be the likeliest method to strengthen and enable us, to curb and confine our wild imaginations, and to *bring them into captivity to the obedience of Christ*.

And now I have gone over the four general Heads, which I proposed to discourse upon; and have shewn in the first, how naturally loose and ungovernable our *thoughts* are, and how little able we are of our selves to manage or controul them. I have 2dly, examined the great inconveniences, of suffering them to continue so wild and unbridled; since they will carry us on insensibly to the grossest enormities, and will expose us to the hottest vengeance of our offended God: I have 3dly, enquired into the eminent *advantages* of a contrary proceeding, of *bringing them into captivity to the obedience of Christ*; that this will secure us, against all *uncleanneſs both of Flesh and Spirit*; will approve us to *Men* by an unblamable

able Conversation, and recommend us to God by an inward *purity* : And *4thly* and lastly, I have laid down such directions, as may enable us to succeed in so beneficial a design ; by fixing in our Minds a firm assurance, of God's *Omniscience* and *Omnipresence* ; by settling our thoughts upon such *Objects*, as may give them a useful and improving entertainment ; by keeping a strict watch over all our *Senses* ; and by fervent *Prayer* to *Almighty God*. What then remains, but that we all resolve to set about this great work with speed and diligence ? Let us not deceive our selves by fondly imagining, that the extravagant motions of our Minds, shall never be accounted for ; that sinful thoughts and corrupt imaginations, shall never rise up against us to condemn us ; but know we, *that for all these things*, if we encourage and indulge them, *God will bring us into Judgment* : that every one of them is registred in the book of Heaven, and will be produced against us in the great Day of the Lord, unless blotted out before by a sincere Repentance : That while we abet them and give way to them, we are
doing

The First Sermon.

29

doing the *Devil's* work for him, and
joyning with him to tempt and to se-
duce our selves : That it is impossible
to have our *outward* Conversation intire-
ly innocent, unless these *inward* Springs
of all our Actions, be made to move
regularly as they ought : That on the
contrary, if we manage *them* rightly,
we secure our selves absolutely from all
actual transgressions , we co-operate
with God in the purifying of our Souls,
we do the whole work of *Religion* at
once, and conquer all its difficulties with
a *single effort* ; that nothing will be hard
to us, when our *thoughts* are once regu-
lated, but the *future ways of Piety* will
be ways of pleasantness, and all her paths
will afterwards be peace. Then also may
we be sure that God will accept of us,
when we bring him our *Hearts sprink-*
led from an evil conscience ; when we are
not only purified from *actual* transgressi-
ons, but have cleansed our *Minds* as well
as our *Bodies* ; regulating our *Affections*
as duly as our *Actions*, and bringing into
captivity every thought to the obedience of
Christ.

To

To whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, 3 Persons but one God of purity, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

2 Cor.

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2 Cor. II. Chapter latter
part of the 11 verse.

*For we are not ignorant of his
devices.*

THe Church of God in this
world is purely *Militant*, and
the life of a Christian is a con-
tinual *warfare*; many *Ene-*
mies must we expect to *encounter* here,
many *difficulties* must we *struggle* and
contend with: And whoever hopes to
sing St. Paul's ἐν νίκῃ, his triumphant
song of Victory, *I have fought the good*
fight, must joyn together throughout
the course of all his actions, an un-
daunted *courage* and an unwearied *in-*
dustry: Our adversary, the *Devil*, is pos-
sessed of such advantages, as will render
him but too unequal a match for any
of

of us, unless we thus rowze up our Christian *fortiude*, and exert to the utmost our pious *diligence* : And hence it is, that in Holy Writ, we find him sometimes compared to the *fiercest* of all Animals a *Lyon*, to denote at once both his *Fury* and his *Strength*; sometimes to the *subtlest* of all *Creatures*, a *Serpent*, to expresse the *cunning* and the *insidiousness* of his *contrivances*. But however *formidable an enemy* he may appear, under such frightful resemblances as these; yet since *we can do all things through Christ who has enabled us*, we need not be afraid of him or decline the *combate*; This *Lyon* of the tribe of *Judah*, will powerfully protect us against the rage of that *roaring one*; and this *Brazen Serpent* which was *lifted up for us*, will secure us from the poysonous infection of the *other*. For as he has furnished us with the *whole Armour of God*, by which we may be defended *against his fiery darts*; so has he likewise endued us with *wisdom from above*, to qualifie us for baffling his most *politick designs* : We have fair *warning* given us to stand upon our guard, we are cautioned how *crafty* an Adversary we have to deal with; all his *wiles* and

and his *stratagems* are laid open to our knowledge and we are not ignorant of his devices.

In my following discourses upon which words, I shall make use of this easie method.

1. I shall carefully examine and enquire into, some of the most *cunning devices of the devil*, by which he endeavours to ensnare and ruine us.

2. I shall shew how very obvious, both these *devices of his* and the *true means to defeat them*, are to any sober and considering Christian.

3. I shall argue from this obviousness, both of *his devices* and the *means to defeat them*, how inexcusable we must be in the sight of God, if we suffer our selves to be intangled by them.

1. Then, I shall carefully examine and enquire into, some of the most *cunning devices of the devil*, by which he endeavours to ensnare and ruine us.

D

And

The Second Sermon.

And here it cannot be supposed that I should pretend, to trace the *Old Serpent* through all his crooked windings; hisname is *Legion*, and his wiles are almost *Infinite*: But that I may take in as many of them as I can, I shall reduce them under these two Comprehensive Heads: They are, either such by which he attempts upon the *diviner* part of Man, and attacks him in those faculties which are *Rational* and *Spiritual*; or else such as are levelled against his *earthly* part, and are conversant about those appetites which are *carnal* and *sensual*.

1. Then, some of the most cunning *devices of the Devil*, by which he endeavours to ensnare and ruine us, are such as he attempts with upon the *diviner* part of us, and attacks us in those faculties which are *Rational* and *Spiritual*.

The most eminent of these, are the *Understanding* and the *Will*; the former we may call the *Eye of the Mind*, whereby it discerns those objects which present themselves unto it; the

the latter is (as it were) the *Hand* of the Soul, with which it seizes or thrusts back, whate're it values or esteems: And since these are the springs of all humane actions, to the performance of which we must be determined, by the *dictates* of our *Judgment*, and the *Bias*s of our *Choice* ; it is therefore about these, that the Devil employs his greatest industry; against these he makes use of his most subtile artifices.

In the first place, as to the *Understanding*. There are two ways extremely differing in themselves, but tending at last to the same pernicious end, the leading unwary people into errors and delusions, by which he attacks this Noble Faculty of the Soul: The one by *swelling* their opinion of it too *high*, and the other by *sinking* their estimation of it too *low* : The former of these inclines them to set up their Reason, for the only supreme Judge of all Truths whatsoever; the latter disposes them totally to reject it, and not to allow it so much as the place of an Evidence or Assistant.

By a groundless conceit of their *self-sufficiency*, and of the great strength and ability of their understanding, (which is the former of those Devices, with which the grand Deceiver attacks this Noble Faculty) some Men have been unhappily and fatally misled, to call in question the *Being* of a *Deity*, and to strike at the foundation of all *revealed Religion*: Because the *infinite perfections* of the *one*, and the *elevated mysteries* of the *other*, are not intirely comprehensible by their *Reason*; they will therefore boldly deny the *Existence* of the *former*, and perversly dispute the *certainty* of the *latter*: They will, by a proceeding the *most irrational* of any, make *that* the only touch-stone of those things, which are not in their-nature tryable by it: And as if they had revived, in relation to spiritual *matters*, the barbarous custom of that ancient Tyrant, who stretched all his guests upon his iron bed, and cut off as much of them as exceeded the length of it; they first fix their own *knowledge*, as the *measure* of all *Truth*; and then lop away, as needless and superfluous, what-

whatsoever goes beyond that established Standard. From hence spring *Atheism, Infidelity, Heresie*; and all the numerous brood of evils, which are propagated from them throughout the world; which first poyson men's *principles*, and then corrupt their *practices*; and by pretending to *improve* and exalt their Understanding, do visibly and palpably *vitate* and *debase* it; while the Devil deals with them, as he did with our first Parents; pretends indeed by making them *know good*, to resemble them to God himself; but renders them by tempting them to *practice, evil*, only more like unto the beasts that perish.

But on the other side; by too mean an opinion of their Understanding, (which is another artifice of the Devil, with which he attempts upon this noble faculty) some are prevailed upon out of a vitious *modesty*, to give themselves up wholly to an *implicit Faith*; to take up their Religion upon the credit of others; and to follow hood-winked without any consideration, whithersoever their Teachers shall lead the way: And this is a most compendious and

comprehensive method, by which the *Tempter* ruins whole multitudes at once; because then he needs only to spread his nets for *some few*, and the *rest* will accompany them of their own accord; and because this kind of proceeding can tolerably shroud it self, under the plausible coverture of *Lowliness* and *Humility*. Hence it is, that so few people ever give themselves the trouble, of enquiring into the Truth of that Religion which they profess, or examining upon what foundation their Belief is grounded: Hence it is, that so few are able, *to give an answer to any one that asks a reason of the hope which is in them*: And hence it is, that they are so wavering and unsettled in their Principles; so apt to renounce their *old* opinions, and embark in any *new one*; if those persons, upon whose Authority they so much rely, shall set them the example of such an alteration. How many absurd and ridiculous notions, that shock humane Reason at a much higher rate, than all the sublimest mysteries of Religion, (which though they sometimes *soar* above it, yet never *thwart* or *contradict* it) are these deluded wretches im-

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imposed upon to entertain ! How many *Legendary Romances* are they obliged to swallow ! How unfairly must they stand out against the most *sensible Evidences*, and baffle the force even of a *Demonstration* ! Till by thus co-operating with the Devil to their own deception, they are justly given over to a *spirit of delusion* ; and they blindly go on after their *blind guides*, untill both together drop down into that ditch ; which their malicious and crafty Adversary, has prepared for them by his *Devices*. But in the next place,

As to the *Will*. There are also two very opposite methods, by which the Tempter attacks *this* faculty of the Soul : The one, by perswading it to be too *pliable* to the understanding, when that has received *false* and *deceitful* impressions ; the other, by rendering it too *refractory* to the Judgment, when that passes a *true* and *upright* censure upon things. By too ready a compliance of the *Will*, with a *mis-informed* understanding, (which is the former of those devices, with which the Devil attacks this lively faculty) Men are often wrought upon to take *wrong*

measures, to chuse a *seeming* good instead of a *real* one ; and to run from that which only has the *appearance* of an Evil, into the unavoidable danger of that which is *truly* such. When the Devil has carried his Temptation so far, as to make the *Understanding* give a Verdict in his favour ; when by shewing the delights and afflictions of *this* World through a Magnifying glass, he has made them appear *great* and *near* at hand ; and by turning the other end of the Perspective, upon the joys and miseries of *another* World, he has represented them as *little* and far *distant* ; when by this partial and deceitful prospect, he has silyly imposed upon the *Judgment*, has brought that over to be of his side, and to pronounce the *former* more considerable than the *latter* ; he then insinuates into the *Will*, how necessary it is that it should close with the dictates, of that *Sovereign Faculty* which is to govern and direct it ; that when the *understanding* has determined what is fit to be done, it is not the *Wills* business to *dispute*, but to be *obey* ; and that pursuant to that obedience it ought to make choice, of those *world-*
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ly pleasures which are proposed to it's acceptance, though with the loss of *Heaven* and *future Happiness*; and to reject any inconveniencies of this *present life*, though with the hazard of being *miserable* in that which is to come. Thus can the *Arch-rebel* preach up *subjection*, when it is to establish his own *Dominion*; and he only advises the *Will* to be resigned to the *Understanding*, as long as that acts under his direction.

For if, on the other-side, This happens to shake off his yoke, and to pass a *true* and *unerring* Sentence upon things; if it is convinced of the infinite disproportion, between *light* and *momentary* troubles or enjoyments, and such torments or felicities as are *Infinite* and *Eternal*; if in consequence, it endeavours to incline the balance of the *Will*, according to the weight of so righteous a Verdict; the Tempter then proceeds by a quite contrary method; and the next of his *Devi-ces*, with which he attacks this lively faculty, is by disposing it to be *stubborn* and *refractory*, to the rules and directions of a *well-informed* Judgment:
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He then incites the Will to *mutiny* and *rebel*; to stand up in opposition against its *Guide* and *Tutor*; not to suffer it self to be biaſſed by the Preſcriptions of *that*; to be led by the hand like a *blind* faculty, and only *Eccho* to the laſt *decision* of the *Underſtanding*; he inclines it to ſhake off the *Guardianship* of *Reason*, to act *independantly* of any thing but it ſelf; warmly to aſſert its unlimited *Prerogative*, and to inſiſt upon the *privileges* of its *native freedom*. Thus does this cunning *Sophiſter* ſhift his way of arguing, according to the various circumſtances of affairs; and from thoſe *premiſſes* which *differ* the moſt widely, ſtill draws the ſame deſtructive *concluſion*: for whether he makes it his buſineſs and deſign, to *unite* or to *divide* theſe two Powers of the Soul; he ſtill does it in order to promote his own intereſt, and to entangle them both by *his Devices*.

Theſe then are ſome of thoſe ſubtil contrivances, by which the Devil attempts to enſnare and ruine us, when he makes his aſſaults upon the *Diviner* part of us; he either cauſes us to

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entertain, too *high* or too *low* an opinion of our *Understanding*; or else he endeavours to render our *Will*, too *compliant* or too *repugnant* to the Dictates of *That*. But,

2. Some of those cunning devices of the Devil, by which he endeavours to ensnare and ruine us; are such as are levelled against the *earthly* part of us, and are conversant about those appetites which are *Carnal* and *Sensual*.

Man being composed of two parts, a *Soul* and a *Body*, by one of which he is partaker of the *Angelical* nature, and by the other has a partnership with *Brutes*; he is therefore assailable in either of these Divisions: And if the *nobler* half of the composition, hold out against the rules and artifices of the Tempter; he then removes his Battery, and plays all his Artillery, against that *moiety* of him which is more mean and despicable, and which by its natural weakness appears to be less tenable. Our Passions and Appetites are those *lower* parts of us, which he often sets upon but too successful-

successfully ; and which by their own innate *depravity*, are too too liable to be attacked and conquered : The method by which he usually makes his approaches, in order to reduce *These* under his Sway and Dominion ; is either.

1. By directing them to a *wrong* Object. Or,

2. (If it happen that they fix upon a *right* one) by rendering them too remiss or too eager in relation to it.

1. Then, one of those crafty *devices of the Devil*, by which he attempts upon our *sensual appetites*, and debauches into his service these our Lusts and Affections, is the directing of them to a *wrong* Object.

Now of all those passions which stir the Soul, and too-often misguide it into disorder and confusion, those which appear to be most considerable, and to have the greatest influence upon our minds, are our *Love* and *Hatred*, our *Joy* and *Sorrow*, our *Hope* and *Fear* :
And

And therefore, since it will be necessary to descend to particulars, in order to illustrate this matter more clearly; these are they which I shall especially instance, as they are subject to the Temptations of our crafty Adversary. Sometimes then he disposes Men to settle their *Love*, upon such things as are not truly *Amiable*; as when the *appearance* of Good is mistaken for its *substance*: and to level their whole *Aversion* against others, which contain no proper motive of *disgust*; as when a *seeming* Evil is avoided for a *real* one: He inclines them to take great *Complacency* and *Delight*, in that which gives no real occasion for their *Joy*; as in some of their sinful commissions and acquirements: and to give themselves up to *Grief* and *Vexation*, when there is nothing that requires or deserves their *sorrow*; as in the severer exercises of Piety and Devotion: He busies their *Hopes* about such expectations, as cannot afford them any *just* entertainment; as the transitory pomps and vanities of this World: and employs their *Fears* upon *imaginary* Terrors, which give no *substantial* ground for their concern; as the loss or lessening

fening of their temporal advantages. Thus all these Passions, which, if rightly directed, would (in their due proportion) be safe and commendable; are *misguided* by him first, and then goaded forward; that so they may run on, in a constant disorder; and not stop, but in utter destruction. For when once Men are unhappily misled, to *close* with *Evil* instead of *Good*, and to *fly* from *Good* instead of *Evil*; to *delight* in *Bitter* instead of *Sweet*, and to *grieve* at *Sweet* instead of *Bitter*; to *hope* for *Darkness* instead of *Light*, and to be *afraid* of *Light* instead of *Darkness*; then has the Devil conducted them to that pitch, of folly and error in which he would have them; and which must fatally consign them over to that dreadful *Woe*, which is denounced by the *Prophet* against so perverse a proceeding. *Wo* (saies he unto them, *that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.* Then will all their diligence but aggravate their guilt, since their earnest endeavours are directed to a bad end; Then will their industry but enhance their

their offence, since they still go farther in pursuit of a *wrong Object*; and being thus inevitably ensnared by the *devices of the Devil*, the fruit of their struggling will be only *this*, to entangle them more closely in the Net which he has drawn over them. But supposing that they do not dash against *this rock*, that they do not mistake a *Shelve* or a *Sand-bank* for their Harbour; but that the Understanding manages the *Helm* rightly, and steers all the Passions towards the *Port* which they should aim at: Yet,

2. There is another cunning *Device* of the Devil, by which he attempts upon our *sensual Appetites*; and that is, (when they fix upon a *due Object*) the rendering them too *remiss* or too *eager* in relation to it.

The proper objects about which our Passions should be conversant, are *real good* and *real evil*: The *former* has an influence upon all those Appetites, which *encline* the Soul towards any objects, or administer to it *Pleasure* and *Satisfaction*, either in the *possession* or *expectation* of them: The *latter* has a respect to all such things, as raise a *horror* of them in the mind,

or

or fill it with *uneasiness* and *disquiet*, either in the *present sense* or *future apprehension*. Now since there are several ranks of *Good* and *Evil*, some of which are *completely* such, and others only in *degree* and *measure*; therefore the subtilty of the temper consists, in rendering our Passions on the *one* side, too *cold* and languid in relation to such objects, whose *perfection* deserves their *utmost* *fervency*; and making them too *hot* and *violent* on the *other* side, in respect of those things which by reason of their *imperfection*, can have no just pretence to so *warm* a prosecution. Thus for instance, in relation to the most *perfect* objects. If our *Love* and our *Desires* be directed towards God, who is a Being most infinitely *amiable*, and in whom all perfection is absolutely comprized; and if accordingly we would exert these Passions to the *height*; the Tempter then insinuates that *excesses* are dangerous, when all the hazard lies in a *defect*; that we should keep our affections within the bounds of *moderation*, when it is impossible they should be too *immoderate*; thus endeavours he to reduce us, from

from *warmth* to *lukewarmness*, and from thence to *indifference*, till he sinks us at last into a *neglect* and *contempt* of him: If our *delight* be in the exercises of *Vertue* and *Religion*, the only sources of a *Joy* that is pure and unallayed; he damps our satisfaction with *melancholly* reflections, upon some *tediousness* or *uneasiness* in the practice of them; he proposes some *difficulties* that may *abate* our *cheerfulness*; till from being vastly *ravishing*, they grow but barely *tolerable*; and our *transports* are succeeded, by *coldness* and *disregard*: If our *Hope* is fixed upon *Heaven* and a happy *Eternity*, which are capable of giving it the most *agreeable* entertainment; he endavours to reduce it to a *faint expectation*; he represents the foundation of it but as *tottering* and *uncertain*; till it *flaggs* and *languishes*, grows *restive* and *inactive*, and thereby comes short of the recompence of reward. On the contrary; if the Devil, the most detestable part of the Creation, and who is perpetually contriving to ruin us by his devices, be made the just object of our *inveterate hatred*; he goes about to *mollifie* us in relation to himself; he pretends he

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is not so much our Enemy as we think him ; he recommends to us his *Allies* the World and the Flesh ; till by thus engaging us in *their* friendship, he lessens our enmity against *himself* ; our aversion diminishes as our confidence encreases ; we drop our weapons in the midst of our warfare, and lay our selves open to the danger of a surprizal : If Sin, the off-spring and true image of the Devil, which is of all things the most *infamous* and most *destructive*, affects us with a *sorrow* as great as it is reasonable ; he strives to *mitigate* our *affliction* for it ; to perswade us that our hearts are too *sensible* and *tender* ; that a more *temperate* grief will atone for our offences ; till our *melancholly* wears off by listning to his Sophistry, and we relaps into a *stupid* and fatal *unconcernedness* : If Hell, the dreadful consequence of Sin, fill'd up with torments that are infinite and eternal, inspires us with the most terrible *Fear* and apprehension ; he perswades us that those miseries are not so *great* as we imagine ; he gives us wrong notions of the *mercy* of God, and a less awful reverence for his *Justice* ; till the terrors either

either vanishes, or else grows too weak, to secure us against dwelling with those everlasting burnings. Thus does he delude us by his crafty artifices, in making our appetites act too *remissly*, when they should be exerted with the *greatest vigour*.

But if, on the other side, our Passions are busied about *such* Objects, as are only Good or Evil in some *degree* and *measure*; the cunning of the Adversary is *then* employed, in *stretching* our appetites beyond their due proportion, and *swelling* them to a bulk that is unnatural and extravagant. Thus for instance; if we have a *tender value* for our *Friends* and *Relations*, which are very *commendable* Objects of a *moderate* affection; he inclines us to *doat* upon them too *excessively*; to set no *bounds* or *limits* to our fondness; till the *Idol* has justled the *Deity* out of our hearts; and the love which we owe to our *Almighty Creator*, is swallowed up in that which we pay to the *Creature*: If the *enjoyments* of this life give us matter of *Joy*, and we *rejoyce* in the good things with which God has blessed

us ; he pushe; us on to *madness* and *intemperance* ; he persuades us to abuse these blessings by *rioting* and *wantonness* ; till by an unhappy sort of Alchymy we convert them into *Curses* ; and lose our *gratitude* to our *bountiful Benefactor*, by a profuse mismanagement of the *benefits* which he imparted : if we *Hope* for *Interest* or *Preferment* in the World, which we may lawfully aim at by just and honourable methods ; he makes us pursue them too *warmly* and *solicitously* ; he betrays us into a *culpable anxiety* for the *future* ; till these *transitory* advantages engross our *whole* concernment ; and leave us *languid* and *indifferent* in respect of *better* expectations. On the contrary ; if we conceive a just *aversion* against the wicked and prophane, and are disgusted (as we ought to be) at their profligate conversation ; he then pushes us on to too *furious a resentment* ; he carries our *detestation* to a *pitch too high* ; he suffers us not to distinguish between the *offender* and the *offence* , but makes our hatred to pass from the *Vice* to the *Person* ; till we kindle up the flames of an implacable animosity ; and sacrifice our *Charity* to our
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intemperate Zeal : If we are *grieved* at some losses or uneasiness that we meet with, whether by death of dear Relations or other touching disappointments, which may *reasonably* affect us with concern and trouble ; he *ruffles* us up into a *provoking impatience*, he enclines us to repine against the hand that smites us ; he persuades us that we *do well to be sorrowful* even unto death ; till by murmuring at his dispensations we incense God against us ; and shut up all the passages from which our consolation should come : If we are *fearful* of some miseries that are likely to overtake us, and have an *affrighting* prospect of some impending calamities ; he raises Ideas of them much more *terrible* than the truth, he prompts us to conceive a dread of them much *larger* than they deserve ; till by a *wrong* notion of their extremity, we think our selves *unable* to encounter them, and declining to wrestle with them, sink down into Dispair. Thus does he mislead us by his wily contrivances, in making all our Passions exert themselves too *vigorously*, when they ought to be regulated with a becoming *moderation*.

These then are some of those cunning devices, with which the Devil attempts to ensnare and ruine us, when he levels his attacks against the *earthly* part of us: he *misguides* our sensual appetites, towards such things as *deserve* not their *pursuit* or *aversion*; or if he finds them tending to a *deserving* Object, he disposes them to be conversant about that, either too *remissly* or too *eagerly*.

And now let us look back, and take a short review, of the dangerous condition in which we are, how we are beset on every side by the *devices of the Devil*: he suits himself to every temper, and accomodates his temptations to every disposition. Are we inclined to *Pride* and *Vanity*? He possesses us with too *lofty* an opinion of our Knowledge; he blows up the bladder, and encreases the Tympany; whilst our self-sufficiency sets us above all assistance or instruction, and we perish for want of those helps which we scorn to make use of. Are we naturally addicted to *Modesty* and *Humility*? he inspires us with too great a *distrust* of our Abilities, and makes us rate our selves more *meanly* and *contemptibly*

temptibly than we ought: Whilst we suffer our selves to be led wholly by the guidance of *others*; lean upon every broken reed, and expose our selves to ruine, by not using those advantages which we are actually possessed of. Is our disposition *pliant* and *manageable*? he debauches our *easiness* into a *servile compliance*, and allures our Will with every deceitful bait; whilst we are drawn a side by each *plausible* appearance, and make choice of things as *blindly*, as we determined of them *rashly*. Is the temper of our Souls *headstrong* and *ungovernable*? he leads us from this *contumacy* to downright *rebellion*; he improves it into *stubbornness*, and hardens it into *obstinacy*; whilst our *Will* runs loose, like a Horse that has cast its Rider; and refuses all *direction* from the *Judgment*, when it is least capable of *directing* it self. Does the ballance of our *Passions* as yet hang *even*? are they *free* and *undetermined* to any Object? he *disguises* the nature of those things about which they are conversant, and endeavours to *debauch* them with false *representations*; whilst they are fatally *misled*, to affect what they should de-

test, or to *fly* from what they should *pursue*; and are fruitlessly tired in the *chace* or the *avoidance*, of that which deserves neither their *fondness* nor their *aversion*. Are our appetites fixed upon such *proper* and *perfect* Objects, as justly exact their *utmost fervency*? he *chills* the *warmth* of our vigorous inclinations, and sets *narrow* bounds to their commendable *sallies*; whilst our unspirited efforts want *life* to recommend them, and our *coldness* degenerates into a *dead insensibility*. Are the motions of our minds directed to such things, as by reason of their imperfection should affect them but *moderately*? He persuades us to exert them in the most *intense* degree, and to *stretch* them beyond the limits of Decency and Reason; whilst Prudence (that should restrain them) is quite lost in *Passion*, and leaves us to be betrayed into *unpardonable excesses*. Thus whatsoever the *frame* is of our *diviner* part, whatsoever the *constitution* is of our *earthly* part, he can fit his temptations to our *several* circumstances, and plant his Engines where they are most likely to prevail; he is ready to attempt us where he finds we lie most open

The Second Sermon.

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open, and are most liable to be ensnared and ruined by his devices.

And thus much shall suffice, for the first General Head of my Discourses upon this Subject, which was carefully to examine and enquire into some of the most cunning devices of the Devil, by which he endeavours to ensnare and ruine us.

But surely in vain are the Stratagems of an Enemy, against such as are informed of his malicious intentions; in vain shall the Tempter make use of these contrivances, if his subtilty and his designs lie open to our knowledge: And this brings me to the consideration of my

2. General, namely, to shew how very obvious both these devices of his and the true means to defeat them, are to any sober and considering Christian: but this I shall defer to *another opportunity*. In the mean time let us pray to Almighty God, mercifully to hear and graciously to assist us, that all those Evils, which the craft and subtilty of the Devil worketh against us, may be brought

brought to nought, and by the providence of his goodness may be so dispersed, that we his servants, being hurt by no temptations, may evermore give thanks to him in his holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom with him and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. *Amen.*

2 Cor.

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2 Cor. II. Chapter latter part of the 11 verse.

For we are not ignorant of his devices.

I Have already spoken to what was proposed in the first particular, which was carefully to examine and inquire into some of the most cunning Devices of the Devil, by which he endeavours to ensnare and ruine us, And shall now proceed to my Second General Head.

2. Namely to shew how very obvious, both these devices of his and the true means to defeat them, are to any sober and considering Christian.

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When our *Reason* is prejudiced by wrong notions, or our *Will* seduced by evil inclinations, or our *Passions* in a hurry and confusion; we must not then expect to be able to fathom, all the deep contrivances of our subtle Adversary; we are apter then, to close with than to examine them; and too often mistake his *sinful suggestions*, for the weighty *result* of our own *opinions*: no, our minds must be composed and quiet, our *Passions* and *Affections* cool and sedate, if we design to set about this work successfully: In these happy intervals of Sobriety and Consideration, we shall easily discover that the *Devices* of the *Devil*, must be managed after such a rate as I have already described to you. For, the excellency and extent of his intellectual powers, which still retain much of their first Perfection, and are hardly equalled by any created Being; must needs give him an insight into our Frame and Composition, and lay open to his knowledge our Weakness and Imperfections: and his inveterate malice which is still exasperated, by a reflection upon that happy state from whence he is fallen, and which Envy

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represents to him as reserved for our possession ; will continually spur him on to make use of his advantages, and to attack and set upon us wheresoever we are assailable. Now there are but *two ways* by which we can be attempted, and that is (as I have already shewed you,) either in our *rational faculties*, or our *sensual appetites*. If he would level his designs against the *reasonable* part of us, he *must* either do it, by *depraving the Understanding*, or *corrupting the Will*; since no action can be morally Evil, and expose the Actor to Guilt or Punishment ; unless through the fault of *one* of these *Two*, we either *judge erroneously*, or *chuse perversely*: If he would assault the *passions* of the *sensitive Soul*; he *can* only do it either by *misguiding* them, or by causing them to be *exercised* in an *undue proportion*; since while they are employed about a right *Object*, and kept within the *bounds* which Reason has assigned them; they are so far from being *culpable*, that they are justly commendable and highly usefull. Thus you see if we seriously consider, the *nature* of the *Tempter* and *our own*; the account which

which I gave you of his Temptations, will appear so *plain* and *obvious* to us, that we cannot be *ignorant* of his *Devices*. I shall therefore proceed to the more usefull enquiry, after what manner we may be able to defeat, these *Devices* of his of which we are not ignorant. First, Then

His chief attempt is upon the noblest faculty, of the *reasonable* and *diviner* part of Man, the *Understanding*; as well knowing that if he can poyson that *Fountain*, and corrupt that *principle* of our actions, all the *streams* which flow from it will be vitiated and infected; and therefore in order to defeat his *Devices*, we must watch most carefully over *This*, and endeavour to secure it against his cunning contrivances. Now this he attempts upon, as I informed you before, either by making us think more *highly* of it than it deserves, or inclining us to value it more *meanly* than we ought. If he would puff us up with too *high* an opinion of it, which is one of his methods of temptation. If he would dispose it to pry into unconceivable mysteries; and to make
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the short line of our own Reason the only measure of divine revelation ; we must have recourse, to the approved *Antidote of Humility* ; which will soon draw forth the dangerous *venome*, and effectually suppress the unnatural *swelling* : we must reflect upon the weakness of humane *Reason*, by many palpable indications discovering it self ; how unable it is to give a just account, of the most ordinary works of the *Creation* ; and consequently how unreasonable it is to make that the measure, of the nature and perfections of their great *Creatour* : That if we will allow of nothing, but what *that* can fully comprehend ; we must not only strike *God* out of the list of *Beings*, but must make a *blank* of the whole *Universe* ; since we cannot perfectly conceive the *meanest Insect*, or the growth and fabrick of the *smallest spire of grass* : That if we will credit nothing upon the authority of *God*, but what our *Reason* can distinctly account for ; we do as good as profess that we think our selves *his equals*, and his Knowledge as limited and imperfect as *Ours*. Our *Understanding* indeed before the *Fall*, could pierce in-
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to the nature of most sublunary things, and was but little inferiour to the *intuition* of *Angels*; but even then it had assigned to it its proper limits, and its utmost efforts were still *bounded* and *finite*; but in the corrupt condition to which it is *now* reduced, it is but a *faint reflection* of what it was before; a *setting Sun* that *glimmers* through a *twilight*, and imparts such a *lustre* as is *sickly* and *uncertain*; and shall we then presume to compare it, with that *inexhausted spring* of *light* which flows from the *Divinity*, and which can never be subject to any failure or decrease? Let us rather modestly acknowledge our great inability, and own *all our sufficiency to be of God*; resolving, with the possessor of the highest earthly *Wisdom*, *not to be wise in our own eyes*; and confessing with the greatest and most learned of the *Apostles*, *that while we are here we only know in part*. Again, if the Tempter assaults this noble faculty of the Soul, by perswading us to think of it more *meanly* than we ought; If he would make us take up with an *implicit faith*, and entertain all opinions without any due examination

nation of them, which is another contrivance by which he would ensnare us ; Let us endeavour to counterplot *this Device* of his, by entertaining a *just value* for this *candle* of the *Lord* : What though our *Reason* is not a *Midday-Sun*, to let nothing ly hid from its excessive *brightness* ; yet is it a *lamp* and a *lanthorn* to our paths, to give us a moderate degree of *light* and *discretion* : Were our *Understanding* too *weak* to give us any assistance, and were we blindly to be led by the *guidance* of others ; God and Nature who *never did any thing in vain*, would have confined that gift to some few persons, who should have exercised the *Talent* for the good of *all* others ; but since it is not thus restrained to *some particulars*, but diffuses it self throughout the *whole* humane nature ; it is evident that God designs its influence to be *universal*, and that it should be made use of by *every rational* creature : Nay he does not exclude the due use of it, even from those things which relate most nearly to himself ; such as the choice of our *Religion*, and the exercise of our *Faith* in both which

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we are to be directed by our *Reason*, till that guides us on to divine *Revelation*; whilst we thus pay to God our *reasonable service*, and avoid the danger of *offering to him the sacrifice of fools*: For God who is a Being the most perfect of any, expects that in the worship which we pay to him, we should approach as near to perfection as we can; and praise him not only with the sincerity of our hearts, but with the greatest strength of our understanding too: and he that sits down satisfied with giving him less than this, shews that he has but a mean opinion of the Almighty, and affronts that Majesty which he would seem to reverence. As then we must not presume to equal our selves with God, by exalting our *understanding* to the same height with his; so must we also take care not to level our selves with *Brutes*, by not exerting that *Reason* which distinguishes us from them. And if we thus keep clear from the two *extremes*, and let our Judgment act as far as it should and no farther; we shall defeat all those cunning devices of the Devil by which

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he attempts upon *this noble* faculty; whether he would incline us to think too *highly*, or to conceive too *meanly* of our Understanding.

But though the *Understanding* be the source of our actions, yet since the malignity of them consists chiefly in the *Will*, the Tempter in order to insnare us by *his Devices*, is not wanting to assault *this* faculty of the Soul; and therefore that we may frustrate his evil designs, our care and circumspection must be here also employed. Now this he endeavours one of these two ways; either by inclining it to be too *servile* to the *Understanding*, when that has passed a *wrong Judgment* upon things; or else to be too *refractory* to it, when *that* has past a censure which is *just and upright*. If then he would make the Will too *servile* to the *Understanding*, when that has been imposed to give a *wrong judgment* of things; to recommend to us that which is Evil, and dissuade us from that which is good; which is one of those *Devices* with which he attacks this faculty of the Soul;

we must be cautious and suspicious of its complying too easily ; we must be jealous and apprehensive, that what it is about to close with, is too agreeable to its natural depravity, which is apt to encline its byas to the wrong side ; and we must therefore, before we suffer the *Will* to be led by it, engage our *Reason* to examine it over again, to review the censure which it has passed upon it, and see if it be conformable to *Justice* and *Truth* : We must not allow it to be wrought upon by the first *impressions*, till the *Judgment* has scanned things more carefully and minutely ; but we must adhere to *Conscience*, as our *better-guide*, if we find that thwart what our *Understanding* would direct to : For *this* may sometimes be so unhappily corrupted, as to close with *Error* instead of *Truth*, and to embrace *Probabilities* instead of *Certainties* ; and it is natural for the *Will* to determine its *choice*, by the plausible appearances which that proposes to it ; but since the consequences of such an easiness is extremely fatal, we must endeavour to stop the growing mischief, and not suffer
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its progress to extend any farther ; if it has tainted our *Intellectuals*, we must not let it vitiate our *Morals* too ; but must in this case chiefly assert that *Freedom of Will*, which renders us at all times the *Masters* of our own *Actions*. But if the Tempter proceeds by another method, and disposes the *Will* to be *disobedient* to the *Understanding*, when that has given a *Judgment* that is *true* and *upright* ; we must also make it our business to defeat *this Device of the Devil*, by managing our *Will* after such a fashion, as may keep it *pliant* and *flexible* to its prudent directions. When our *Reason* dictates to us the most wholesome instructions, and our *Will* *refuses* to be influenced by its advice ; every offence of this kind is a *presumptuous sin*, and will aggravate our guilt, and enhance our Punishment : In the *other* instance, where an erroneous Judgment misleads the inclinations, the fault lies chiefly, in not taking more care to be well informed, and our unhappy errors may be liable to some pity ; but in this, we fly in the face of Conscience and of Reason, we go on

boldly against the convictions of both, and commit our transgressions *with a high hand*; and therefore, as this is a most extraordinary provocation, so We ought to consider (as a means to restrain us from it,) how severely this will expose us to the Divine Vengeance, and leave us without any thing to plead in our excuse: The *Understanding* will urge in its *own* behalf, how justly it determined, and how warmly it recommended; and the *Will* must be left defenceless by it self, to bear the whole blame of its *obstinate perverseness*: We must then maintain that due *superiority* of the *Judgment*, by which the *Will* is obliged to be submissive to it, in all things that are lawful and allowable; Nature has endowed it with such a *Prerogative*, as in a great measure *excuses* the *wrong* choice of the *Will*, when it is agreeable to the *wrong Sentence* that it passed by the *Understanding*; but renders its failings most *abominable* and *flagitious*, when they are committed *contrary* to the dictates of *that*: We must therefore resolve to keep the *Balance* of our *Will*, in such a just and even *counterpoise*; as that the least
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weight of Truth or Piety, may infallibly turn the Scale to that side. Thus if the *Will* be not *servily compliant*, but only *duely obedient* to the *Understanding*, it may baffle all the *crafty devices* of the Devil, whether he would dispose it to be too flexible or too *refractory* to the *Judgment*. By such prudent means and methods as these, may the sober and considering Christian defeat those *cunning devices* of the Tempter, by which he attempts upon the *nobler* part of Man, and attacks him in those *faculties* which are *Rational* and *Spiritual*. But,

2dly. If he finds us impregnable on this side, he has still another avenue by which he may attempt us; and that is, by levelling his temptations against the *earthly* part of us, and making them conversant about those appetites which are *carnal* and *sensual*: And therefore if we design to defeat all *his devices*, it is not sufficient that we have maintained the *former* post, unless we also provide for the defence of the *latter*. If then his *cunning contrivances* are employed, a-

gainst our *viler faculties*, our *Passions* and *Affections*; if in order to reduce them under his dominion, he enclines us to fix them upon a *wrong Object*, which is the first wily Stratagem that he forms against them; we must then oppose him in his own method, and carefully weigh the *end* to which we direct them: We must never suffer them to launch out upon their *Voyage*, till we are sure they have not mistaken the *Course* which they ought to steer; but must cautiously examine what it is that they *tend* to, before we allow them to follow the bent of their inclination: in pursuance of this end we must carefully enquire, into the true *nature* of *Good* and *Evil*; and must be able to distinguish with the greatest exactness, between the *reality* and *appearance*, betwixt the *substance* and *shadow* of them: Our more *pleasing* affections, such as our *Love*, our *Joy* and our *Hope*, do never cordially *embrace* or *close* with any thing, but what has a *true* or a *seeming Goodness* to engage them; and our *moroser* appetites, such as our *hatred*, our *Grief* and our *Fear*, do never a-
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void or fly from any Object, which has not the *nature* or the *semblance* of *Evil* to *alarm* them : Now since the cunning of the Tempter consists in conveying *false Ideas* to the mind, and representing that as Good or Evil, which is only a *delusion* and the *counterfeit* of them both ; our godly *Wisdom* must be therefore exercised, in pulling off the mask, and revealing the Imposture ; in removing that *cloud* which was cast over true Goodness, and disclosing her *native* beauties to the eye of the Soul ; and in washing off the *paint* from what is really Evil, and shewing it in its genuine and natural *deformity*. For such is the *inherent loveliness* of the one, such is the *intrinsic loathsomeness* of the other ; that the *former* can never be seen, but it must *invite* and *allure* ; nor the *latter* be ever reviewed, but it must *nauseate* and *disgust* : If therefore we set them in a *true light*, and look upon them as they are, *naked* in themselves ; our Passions can never err, in their *pursuit* or their *aversion* ; they can never be directed to a *wrong Object*. But supposing the Tempter to

to be unsuccessful in this point, he has yet *another* refuge to which he may betake himself, and that is, the inclining our affections, though fixed on a *due Object*, to act too *remisly* or too eagerly in relation to it: And therefore if we resolve to defeat *all* his Devices, we must arm our selves against him in this particular also, and endeavour to drive him out of this *last* retreat: and now, since the fault lies either in a *defeat* or *excess*; in not exerting our Passions as *far* as we ought, or in extending them *farther* than we should; our care must be employed in *proportioning* their efforts, according to that *measure* of perfection, which their *Object* is possessed of: somethings may be so *completely amiable*, that we cannot embrace them with too ardent an *affection*; some may be so vastly *delightful*, that we cannot too much *rejoyce* in the possession of them; some may be so infinitely *attractive* and *inviting*, that our *Hope* cannot be too earnest in the prosecution of them: For can any one *Love* God too zealously? Can we *delight* too much in the practice of Holiness?

liness? Or *pant* too eagerly after Heaven and Happiness? Again, some things are so very *abominable* in their nature, that it is impossible to entertain too great a *detestation* of them; some may be so intollerably *shameful* and *pernicious*, that our *sorrow* for them can never be too immoderate; some may give a prospect of such *insupportable circumstances*, as that we cannot reflect upon them with too great an *apprehension*; For can any one *Hate* the *Devil* more than he deserves? Can we be too sensibly *afflicted* for our presumptuous *transgressions*? Or have too great a *dread* of everlasting *destruction*? To be *lukewarm* in such cases as these, is worse than to be either *hot* or *cold*, and will only tempt God to *spue us out of his mouth*; we may therefore safely give the *reins* to our Passions and Affections, when we know their greatest *speed* can carry us no farther than we should go; we must forbear to use the *curb*, where there is more need of the *spur*; and when we fix upon an Object that is good or evil in *perfection*, we must follow or fly from

from it with our *utmost fervency*. But if on the other side the *Objects* of our Passions, have only *some degrees* of Good and Evil; we must then *confine* our appetites within their just bounds, and not suffer them to range *too loosely* or *extravagantly*: Some things deserve a well regulated *affection*, but betray us into a fault when we *embrace* them too tenderly; some ought to inspire us with a becoming *Joy*, but lead us into inconveniencies when we *delight* in them too much: Some are the *sitting* entertainments of a modest *expectation*, but are dangerous and destructive when we *pursue* them too fiercely: For though it is commendable to *value* our Friends, or Relations, yet may we not *doat* upon them too *fondly*? Though we are allowed to rejoyce in temporal blessings, yet may we not indulge our selves in them too *intemperately*? though we have leave to *hope* for worldly advantages, yet may we not *long* after them too *immoderately*? Again, some things may call for our just *aversion*, and yet it may be a crime to *detest* them too inveterately; some may exact from

us a decent concern, and yet cannot justify too sensible a sorrow; some may raise in us a well grounded apprehension, and yet will not excuse such a Fear as is excessive: For though we are permitted to hate the enemies of God and Goodness, yet may not our expressions of it be too uncharitable? Though it is lawful to grieve for the calamities of this life, yet may we not afflict our selves for them in too great a measure? Though it is natural to be afraid of them which can only kill the body, yet may we not yield to this fear so unreasonably, as to make it prejudicial to our very Souls? The Tempter is ready upon all such occasions, to urge us beyond the bounds of Reason and Religion; and therefore we must be prepared to act effectually against him; by duly proportioning the vigour of our Passions, to the degrees of Good and Evil which we meet with in their Objects. By such prudent means and methods as these, may the sober and considering Christian defeat all those cunning devices of the Devil; which are leveled against the earthly part of

of Man, and are conversant about those appetites which are *carnal* and *sensual*. Thus whether he attempts upon the *reasonable* or the *sensitive* Soul, we are fairly forewarned and forearmed against him ; we are neither ignorant of *his devices*, nor of the *means* to defeat them ; and therefore if we are foiled, the fault lies at our own doors ; since we are thus enabled to resist him, and to be *more than conquerours*. And this leads me to the consideration of my

3. And last General, namely, to argue from this obviousness, both of his *Devices* and the means to defeat them, how very inexcusable we must be in the sight of God, if we suffer our selves to be intangled by them.

God, who is faithful, will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able ; but with the temptation (you see) he makes also a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it : Notwithstanding all the cunning contrivances of the Tempter, he has qualified us to

to resist him in every attack, and has supplied us with weapons for carrying on the warfare : And therefore if we resemble the *children of Ephraim*, who *being harnessed and carrying bows, turned themselves back in the day of battle* ; if being thus armed for conquest, we shamefully quit the field; we have nothing to blame but our own cowardice, nor any excuse to make that will avail us before God. To set off the inexcuseableness of this proceeding, I shall

1st. Insist upon the *Folly* of it ;
And,

2^{dly}. Upon the *Ingratitude* of it.
And,

1st. Since the Devices of the Devil and the true means to defeat them, are so obvious to any sober and considering Christian ; we are inexcuseable if we suffer our selves to be intangled by them, because it is a proceeding most *unreasonable* and *foolish*.

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Can any *folly* be greater than his, who perishes with the means of safety in his hands? Who knows the ill intentions of his malicious adversary, has timely notice of his contrivances against him, and sufficient ability to encounter and defeat him; and yet through a careless incogitancy, or a cowardly dependancy, shall give the Enemy an opportunity to break in upon and ruine him? *Surely in vain is the net spread, in the sight of any bird; and he must be more void of reason than those irrational Creatures, who will run headlong into the trap which he sees laid for him. Indeed were we ignorant of these his devices, we might be liable to the danger of a surprize; or were we not enabled to frustrate his attempts, we might be crushed by a calamity foreseen but unavoidable; but when we are doubly fenced, against his cunning and his rage; both with Wisdom to discover his stratagems, and Strength to repel his Force; if we fail to make use of those advantages we enjoy, our destruction* is

is wholly of our selves, and we cannot accuse any thing for it but our own madness. 'Tis true if submission might make way for our safety, or cause the *Chains* to be lighter which our *Tyrant* would lay upon us; we had then some shadow of reason for our yielding, in hopes to render our *vassalage* less painful: But since we know he prepares for us the *heaviest* fetters, and intends us for the most *laborious* and *uneasy* drudgery; since his *work* is *Sin*, the most *shameful* of all employments; and his *wages* *Death*, the most *dreadful* of all recompences; rather to trust to his kindness who is malice in perfection, than to exert that power which is given us for our security; is so absurd a *folly* as can be equalled by nothing, but our *ingratitude* to that God who would protect us against him. And this brings me to consider.

2dly. That since these devices of the Devil and the true means to defeat them, are so obvious to any sober and considering Christian; we are

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inexcusable if we suffer our selves to be intangled by them, because it is a proceeding the most *ingrateful* of any.

Can any thing be more *ingrateful*, than to spurn at the kindness of a most bountiful and generous Benefactor? To reject those favours which he offers so obligingly, and renounce that assistance which he so heartily tenders? How justly and severely was that Servant punished, who hid his Master's single Talent in a Napkin! and when we have so many committed to our care, how shall we be able to account with our Lord, unless we employ them to some advantage? Shall that *heavenly Wisdom* with which he inspires us, in order to discover the designs which are laid against us, be neglected as a caution that is needless and insignificant? Shall that Christian *fortitude* which is communicated from above, to fit us for resisting our Potent Adversary, be thrown aside as a defence that is useless and unnecessary? Shall all those abilities which God bestows upon

upon us, that we may secure our own happiness and advance his glory, be *buried* and grow *rusty* in an *unactive Idleness*? How are we *thankful* to him for all these benefits, if we basely desert the cause in which he has engaged us? abuse his gifts by not using them as we ought? And make them but the *Trophies* of his and our *Enemy*? Has he disclosed to us the *intrigues* of our Adversary, and taught us to *counterplot* his most crafty devices? Has he armed us distinctly against his several *attempts*, and furnished us for *resistance* wheresoever he assaults us? And shall we tamely give up that Garrison to the *Enemy*, which he has so well *fortified* and intrusted to our care? What shall we say to extenuate this Treachery? What can we urge in mitigation of our crime? Shall we pretend that we were deluded by the *wiles of the Devil*? This is to cast a *scandal* upon the *Wisdom* of God, which has so plainly laid open all his contrivances: Shall we say that though we knew them we were *not able* to escape them? This is to impeach the *Power* of God, which is al-

ways at hand to *support* and *strengthen* us : Inshort, we can have nothing to plead in such unhappy circumstances; but with *guilt* in our *hearts* and *blushes* in our *cheeks*, must own our selves liable to the *double* imputation, of the grossest *folly* in respect of our selves, and the vilest *ingratitude* in relation to our God.

Thus have I, in this and my former Discourse, gone through with the method I then proposed. And 1st. have endeavoured to lay before you, a lively draught of those *devices of the Devil*, with which he attempts to ensnare and ruine us. I have 2^{dly}. shewn you how very obvious, both these *devices* of his and the true *means* to defeat them, are to any sober and considering Christian. And 3^{dly}. I have argued from this obviousness, both of *his* Devices and the means to defeat them, how very inexcusable we shall be in the sight of God, if we suffer our selves to be intangled by them. and now I have nothing more to add, but only to exhort you from the consideration of the first General, to stand upon your *Guard* and be exceeding *watchful*, since the *devices* of
your

your Adversary are so many and so cunning: To advise you from the consideration of the 2^d, to be very *sober* and *considerate*; since to *such* his *devices* and the method of defeating them, are very obvious and intelligible: And earnestly to intreat you from the consideration of the 3^d, not to incur the censure of *foolish* and *ingrateful*; by being inexcusably ensnared by these *devices*, which are discovered so plainly, and may be defeated so certainly. Then will the wiles and stratagems of the Devil but advance the fame of our Christian Wisdom, in making use of those means which are given us for eluding them; then shall we draw those advantages which we ought, *from our not being ignorant of his Devices.*

Now to God the Father Son and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour Power, Might, Majesty and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

Laus Deo.

your Address are to know and to
knowing I desire you from the con-
sideration of the ad. to be very
and possibly: time to find his
and the method of reflecting them, and
very costly and intelligible: And
I desire to present you from the con-
sideration of the ad. not to incur the
cost of folly and ignorance, by
being unnecessarily exposed by their
eyes, which are discovered to be
and may be better to be left
will the wise and frugal of the D.
I, but advance the same of our
than Wisdom, in making use of those
means which are given us for raising
them: then shall we draw these things
things which we ought to be careful
to be out of our Power.

Now to God the Father Son and Holy
Ghost, be ascribed all Honour Power
Might, Majesty and Dominion, for
forth and for evermore. Amen.

In Aus Deo.

**I St. John IV. Chapter, 8th
Verse, the latter part
of the Verse,**

God is Love.

ST. John, the beloved Disciple, (all whose Writings whether Evangelical or Epistolary, are actuated and enlivened with Divine Flames of heavenly Love,) being desirous to inspire his Readers with an equal warmth towards their Lord and their Redeemer, does not endeavour to represent God unto us, as some morose and melancholly tempers conceit him, under the affrighting notion of a severe and rigid Task-Master ; but proposes him to our consideration, and recommends him to

our Contemplation, under the most inviting resemblance of a tender and indulgent *Father*. Hence it is, that he every where insists upon the wonderful instances of *God's Love* towards us, repeating them no less than seven times in this very Chapter; as knowing that to be the most natural and effectual way, to produce in any rational Soul a *love* towards him, which love is the fountain and foundation of Piety and Perfection. Now because all the *Attributes* of God are God himself, therefore the *Apostle* does not express himself by saying, that *God is loving*, or *God is affectionate*, words that may be suitable to the Passions of Men, but speaks concerning him in the *Abstract*, *God is Love*, meaning thereby thus much, that whatever is applicable to that Divine Passion, or deducible from it, is eminently seated in God, in its highest perfection and most intense degree, and derived from him to the Sons of Men; *God is Love*. In the handling of these words, I shall insist upon the two following particulars.

1. I shall prove the Apostles assertion, that *God is Love*, by the most general and most illustrious instances of his *love* towards us.

2. I shall shew what return is due from us to God, for those wonderful instances of his *love* towards us.

1. Then I shall prove the Apostles assertion, that *God is Love*, by the most general and the most illustrious instances of his *love* towards us.

And here every *person* of the sacred and individual *Trinity*, seems with a sort of rivalry to contend, which shall most vigorously assert its *Love* towards mankind; and though all their operations proceed from one and the same God, joyntly and coequally, yet every person challenges to it self some particular act of favour and indulgence. *God the Father*, in the wonderful works of our *Creation* and *Preservation*. *God the Son*, in the stupendous *Miracle* of our *Redemption*. *God the Holy Ghost*, in the transcendent blessing of our *Sanctification*. In all of which

which they abundantly verifie the *Apo-*
stles assertion, That, *God is Love*. And

1. *God the Father is Love*; and
that particularly in the wonderful
works of our *Creation and Preserva-*
tion.

We cannot look either on our *Bodies*,
or on our *Souls*, but in either of them
we shall see, *that the Lord hath done*
great things for us. The *structure* of
the *one*, made for *Sovereignty and*
Dominion; and the *perfections* of the
other, suited for the fellowship of *An-*
gels, and the fruition of the *Almigh-*
ty; do sufficiently set forth the *good-*
ness of the Lord, and declare the *wonders*
which he hath done for the children of men:
That our *Bodies* are *fearfully and wonder-*
fully made, we have not only the *atte-*
station of the *Royal Psalmist*, but our
own experience also abundantly to *con-*
vince us. How admirably are all the
parts disposed for the *service and assi-*
stance of one another; so that the *Eye*
cannot say to the Hand, *I have no need*
of thee; nor, again the *Head to the Feet*,
I have no need of you! By what *admi-*
rable Conveyances, and almost unper-
ceivable

ceivable Channels, has the God of Nature ordered the distribution of our nourishment and refreshment ! with how just an equality is the whole stock of nutriment dispenced ! so that, as in a well governed Family, *all* parts enjoy their due proportion, and no *one* surfeits with *excess* borrowed from the *starving* of *another* ! What a Character of Majesty and Dignity is imprinted on the Countenance ! and how wonderful a variety is contained within the breadth of that single Span ! All these certainly are convincing Arguments of the *Love* of our *Creator*, and the choiceness of the *Workmanship* sufficiently makes out the kindness of the *Artificer*. But if we pass from the *Cabinet* to the *Jewel*, from considering the *Body* to contemplating the *Soul*, we shall find yet stronger evidences of the *Divine Goodness*. This is that Image of God, that Ray of Divine Perfection, which places us but a *little lower than the Angels*, and qualifies us for their Society and Conversation. How comprehensive an *Understanding* has he blessed us withall ! How free and undetermined a *Will* ! How large and how tenacious a *Memory* ! And when he

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The Fourth Sermon,

he might have made us *insensible*, as the *Stones* ; or but *barely sensitive* as the *Beasts* ; how nice and how discerning a *Reason* has he communicated to us ! By *this*, we make the works of God familiar to us, and the whole Creation is but a narrow Object of our unwearied contemplation ; by this we inquire into all the secrets of Nature, raise new Discoveries out of her fruitful Womb, and (as it were) fathom the *greater World*, and contract it within the *lesser*. But above and before all, by this we are qualified to know God and to praise him ; by this we are made capable of those Revelations which he is pleased to make of himself : of enjoying a sort of intercourse with the Almighty on this side Heaven, and of an eternal Union with him hereafter. Now this breathing of himself into us, this communicating to us both his happiness and his perfections, are undeniable proofs of the *loving kindness of the Lord*, and that his *Goodness is great unto us*. But as *God the Father is Love*, in the wonderful work of our *Creation*, so also is he in that of our daily *Preservation*. The finest and most delicate compositions (we know)

know) are always liable to the greatest inconveniences ; and this *Body* of ours, this *Epitome* and *Compendium* of the greater World, like *Archimedes's* Sphear, which represented the Heavens, is but *Glass* and brittleness : so that an *Almighty Power*, and an *infinite Love* and *Care* must necessarily watch over us, or every Minute would be that of our dissolution. Now God it is, that bids the *Warring Elements* in our composition to be at *Peace* with one another, which otherwise would spend themselves in *civil Discord*, and waste the Country which they fought in : God it is, that binds up the baleful influences of malignant *Planets*, That suffers not the *Sun* to burn us by Day, nor the *Moon* to freeze us by Night : That says to the Plague, stop here ; and to Pestilential Diseases, move no farther : And, as our Saviour assures us, that even a Sparrow, one of the least Particles of the Creation, shall not fall to the Ground without our Heavenly Father ; so may we assure our selves, that Mankind the noblest part of the Divine Workmanship, would soon return to its primitive nothing, unless supported
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and sustained by Him. But as he consults the preservation of our Beings, so does he take care of our well-being also; and therefore He it is, whose wakeful Providence makes all things work together for good to those that fear him; who by admirable and to us unconceivable methods, makes every seeming chance and accident subservient to the ends for which he has designed them; who whether he afflicts or comforts, whether he casts down or raises up, is still the same God of Mercy, the same loving and tender Creator. And hence it is, that in Holy Scriptures he adopts all instances of the greatest tenderness and love to express his own by; He personates all the nearest and most endearing Relations; that of a Husband, *I will Marry thee to my self*; of a Father, *I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my First-born*: Nay he vies Bowels with the tender Sex, and makes it more possible for a Woman to renounce her compassion towards the Son of her Womb, than for him to withdraw his. By all these endearments, by these cords of a Man, these bands of Love, (as himself styles them) endeavouring not only

ly to draw us to him, but also to
tye and fasten himself to us. And
certainly all these considerations, of
the Beauty of our out-ward Fabrick,
the perfection of our Souls, and the
watchful care of Providence in de-
fending and preserving us, do unde-
niably verify the Apostles assertion,
that God the Father is Love. But,

2ly. God the Son is Love, and that
particularly in the stupendous Miracle
of our Redemption.

And indeed this is a mercy of the
first Magnitude, and of such an amaz-
ing Nature, that it would overpower
our Imagination to consider it in the
gross; and therefore we must take it
in pieces, and endeavour to calculate
the vastness of this Love, by the 4 fol-
lowing Meditations.

1st. By reflecting upon the deple-
rable condition, wherein the whole
human Nature was involved, before
this Miracle of goodness redeemed
them from it.

2ly. By

2ly. By considering the unconceivable height of bliss and happiness, to which it is exalted by it.

3ly. By contemplating the wonderful methods of God's Providence for perfecting this Mercy, and reconciling it with his eternal Justice.

4ly. By meditating on the circumstances of our Saviours Humiliation; every one of which is an enhancement of the mercy:

1st. Then to make a due estimate of *this act of Love*, we must reflect upon the deplorable condition wherein the whole humane Nature was involved, before this Miracle of goodness redeemed them from it.

Man indeed was created in the highest degree of happiness and perfection that humane Nature was capable of; his Reason was like the intuition of Angels, his Understanding was vigorous and active, his Will unbyassed by those propensions to evil which so frequently seduce us; and all the faculties

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culties of his Soul elevated in so sublime a manner, as fitted him for the great design of his bountiful *Creator*; a supplying the room of the fallen *Angels*, a familiar intercourse with the blessed *Spirits*, and sometimes the Conversation of *God* himself. But, (alas!) of how short a continuance was this state of Innocence and Felicity! It was but like a flash of Lightning, a momentary brightness, that disappeared as soon as it was seen; and only a short-lived blaze of Happiness, that went out as soon as it was kindled. The ingratitude and disobedience of our first unhappy Parents, exposed themselves and their most wretched Posterity, to the loss of those advantages they stood possessed of, and to the heavy wrath of an offended *God*. Strait the *Understanding* was clouded, the *Reason* vitiated, the *Will* depraved; till at length in process of time, a total ignorance of Spiritual Concerns possess the generality of Mankind: *The God of their Fathers* was either not known or not regarded, and every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes: They groped for their way, as in the dark, and

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the *blindness* being universal, it was in vain to expect a *guide*. It is true indeed, that in this more than *Egyptian Darkness*, the Children of *Israel*, by a peculiar privilege, had their *Goshen*, their *Land of Light*; but a Light so weak and so imperfect, that it seemed rather the *glimmering* of a *Twilight*, than the *brightness* of a *Day*; a Light so blended and intermixt with *Darkness*, that it was hard to judge which had the greater share in it. Thus was the whole World in a manner buried in ignorance and obscurity, and *darkness* was spread over the face of the Earth; till, as in the *Creation*, the *Spirit of God* moved upon this *Chaos*, and God said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*. But farther, besides this diminution of purity and perfection, the state of Mankind before their *Redemption* was attended with circumstances yet more deplorable: *We had made a Covenant with Hell, and with Death were at an agreement*; we were the *Objects* of God's anger and displeasure, the *children of wrath*, and *Heirs of Destruction* being continually expos'd to the horrors of a wounded Conscience, and the dread-
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ful expectations of vengeance to come ; till the Sun of righteousness arose upon us with healing in his wings, and the day-spring from on high visited us, to guide our Feet into the ways of Peace. Which leads me to the 2d Meditation of God the Son's Love to us, namely a consideration of the unconceivable height of bliss and happiness, to which we are exalted by this Miracle of our Redemption.

Christ, The great Mediator of the new Covenant, has managed the terms of our reconciliation with so wonderful a goodness, that all the hardships of them lie upon himself, and nothing but advantages accrue to us. We have nothing more to do than to accept of proffered Mercy ; and the only condition required for our acquittal, is that we will not rebel again. From condemn'd Criminals, we are advanced to the degree of Favourites, nay of Sons ; and may now approach boldly to the Throne of Grace, which we before dreaded as the Tribunal of Justice : From Dungeons of darkness, and the shadow of Death, we are brought forth into

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the light of the Gospel, and to the glorious Liberty of the sons of God: Instead of a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation, we have the stedfast assurances of mercy and indulgence: In short, instead of that strange impotency to good which we formerly lay under, and an utter inability to make any the least advances towards the retrieving our lost condition, we now can do all things through Christ who has enabled us; and unless it be our own faults, may go on from strength to strength, till unto the God of God's appeareth every one of us in *Si-on*: For if we so fight, as to conquer, and so run, as to obtain, for which by our Admission into the state of Grace we are fully qualified; we are thereby made capable of a state of Glory, and henceforth there is laid up for us a Crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give us in that day. Being made the Sons of God, through Christ, by adoption and grace, we are Co-heirs with him of the everlasting Kingdom of his Father, which he himself assures us, was prepared for the faithful from the foundation of the World; a Kingdom of Pow-

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er and of Glory ; where happiness shall be infinite as well in degree as continuance ; where we shall meet with the complement and fulfilling, of what our improved and enlarged apprehensions can conceive ; where *Faith* shall be swallowed up in *Vision*, *Hope* advantageously lost in *Fruition*, and our *Charity* extended to a degree as boundless and immense as the object of it. Lord, what is Man, that thou so regardest him ? and the Son of Man, that thou thus visitest him ! Thou madest him indeed a little lower than the Angels, but it was with a design of crowning him with Glory and Worship : O that Men, would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he hath done for the children of Men ! Which brings me to the 3d Meditation, in relation to this Act of Love, namely, a contemplation of the wonderful method's of God's Providence for perfecting this work of Mercy, and reconciling it with his eternal Justice.

No sooner had the eternal presence of God foreseen the fall of sinful mankind, and his impartial *Justice* sentenced the offenders; but his unlimited *mercy* interposed in their favour, and his boundless *Wisdom* found out the way. Man sinned and Man must satisfy; the offence was *Infinite*, and the satisfaction must be *proportionable*, and therefore not to be made by any *finite* Being: Here *humane reason* is at a loss; nay the *Angels* themselves gaze and admire, and cannot comprehend: But O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Offended goodness contrives the method of pacification; and by uniting in the same person a *finite* nature and an *infinite*, at once took care, that *Man the offender* should satisfy, and yet the satisfaction should be *sufficient*. Thus, *Mercy and Truth met together*; the divine goodness exerted it self, and yet did not clash with his eternal *Veracity*: *Righteousness and Peace* kissed each other; the *Justice* of God had its due course, and yet his *enmity* with mankind was done away. Then was God's *Ironical* exprobration

bation, *Man is become like one of us*, most happily changed into mankind's joyful *exclamation*, *God is become like one of us*. And this leads me to the 4th. and last Meditation, namely, the circumstances of our Saviour's Humiliation; every one of which is an enhancement of the mercy.

For God to take flesh upon him for our sakes, was a Humiliation so amazing, that to endeavour to express it, were to set bounds to *Infinity*. The Holy *Psalmist* gives his opinion of the whole race of mankind, collectively taken, *that every man living is altogether vanity*; nay he degrades them yet lower, and assures us, that when they are impartially surveyed, *the children of men are deceitful upon the weights, they are altogether lighter than vanity* it self. Yet for a condition thus *vile and despicable*, did the *Eternal Majesty of Heaven and Earth* exchange his state of unconceivable *Glory*; that by taking upon himself our vileness, he might sanctifie and exalt it beyond its primitive dignity, even to a participation of his own *essential blessedness*. But this was only the first step of his condescension, for he did not only submit to be like

the generality of mankind in the infirmities of their nature, but also to conform himself to the most wretched part of it, by his sufferings and afflictions. *He was* (says the Evangelical Prophet) *despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, he was oppressed and he was afflicted;* the reason follows immediately after, *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.* This was the constant course of his whole life, but the catastrophe of it was yet more Tragical. Let us attend him to the Garden, and find him in unexpressible Agonies, drinking-down the cup of God's wrath which was prepared for us; presently after we see him seized by his enemies, forsaken by his friends; 'tis true indeed, one of his Disciples meets him, but it is to betray him; another follows him but it is to deny him: If we accompany him to Pilate's Common-Hall, we see him abused by the Soldiers, in every branch of his three-fold Sacred-Office; as King, they Crown him with thorns, bow the knee in derision, and cry *Hail King of the Jews;*

Jews ; as *Prophet* , they blindfold him, and buffet him, and bid him *propheſie who ſmote him* ; as *Prieſt*, they lead him like a Lamb to the *ſlaughter*, make himſelf the *ſacrifice* : If we follow him to *Golgotha*, we find him *making his grave with the wicked*, executed amongſt common Malefactors, and bending beneath his Father's Anger and the ſins of the whole World : and if the *Prophet*, upon the proſpect of ſuch ſufferings, could break forth into this doleful exclamation, *That never was ſorrow like his ſorrow* ; we ought certainly to *Eccho* out this expreſſion from our grateful hearts, *that never was love like his love*. Now all theſe conſiderations, of our former miſeries, our preſent advantages, the wonderful methods of Providence in *contriving our Redemption*, and our Saviour's ſufferings to compleat it, theſe (I ſay) do abundantly make out the truth of the *Apoſtle's* poſition, that *God the Son is love*.

But 3dly *God the Holy Ghost is love*, and that particularly in the tranſcendent bleſſing of our *Sanctification*..

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As if it were a small matter for God to dwell *amongst* us, he is now content to dwell *within* us, to make our hearts his habitation, and by the influence of so divine a presence to drive all evils from that neighbourhood: For our impurity and corruption contracted by original guilt, having set us at enmity with God; it was necessary, that what ever was wanting in our nature of primitive Holiness and Perfection, should be supplied in order to our reconciliation with him; and this is that great work of *Sanctification* which is proper and peculiar to the *Holy Spirit*. Now the work of *Sanctification* is wrought by him in us according to these following degrees.

1st. By his revealing unto us the will of God; of which so much in all ages has been disclosed, as was sufficient to instruct men unto eternal life. *There have been holy prophets ever since the world began* (says St. Luke) *Prophecy came not at any time by the will of man* (says St. Peter) *but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Ho-*

ly Ghost. When it pleased God to speak to us in the last days by his Son, even that Son sent his spirit into the Apostles, the spirit of truth, that it might guide them into all truth, teaching them all things, and bringing all things to their remembrance whatsoever Christ had said unto them; as the Apostle of this Epistle informs us in his Gospel. Whatsoever therefore is necessary for us Christians to know and believe in order to our Salvation, is not only delivered and communicated by the holy spirit's revelation, but made credible also to us by his illumination; by which only it comes to pass, that Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, is unto us that believe, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Now if to know God be life eternal (as our Saviour himself assures us it is) and if Life Eternal be valuable in it self, which no man certainly will deny; than great must be the Love of this Holy Spirit towards us, in imparting to us so precious an advantage.

2dly. And.

2dly. Another degree of *sanctification* wrought in us, is by the regenerating and renewing of us in the inward man : For our natural corruption consisting in an aversness of our will to all that is good, and in a depravity of our affections; the regaining of our purity must necessarily consist, in regulating the latter according as we ought, And inclining the former towards the will of God ; and this is wrought in us by the *Spirit of God* : For according to his mercy he saveth us (says the Apostle) by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. And indeed we are all at first so defiled by the corruption of our nature and the pollution of our sins, that we are unfit to appear in the sight of him, whose eyes will not behold the thing that is unclean ; But we are washed, but are sanctified, but we are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God. The 2d. instance therefore of this Love of God the Holy Ghost towards us, is this renewing of us in all the parts and faculties of our Soul.

4thly. As

3dly. He does not only infuse into our hearts good dispositions, but leads, directs, and governs us in our actions and conversations, that we may actually do and perform those things which are well-pleasing and acceptable unto God. *If we live in the Spirit, (that is, are quickned by his renewal,) we shall also walk in the Spirit, (that is, be led by his directions) and if we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the Lusts of the Flesh;* we are not barely disposed by him, but animated and acted in vertuous Operations; he is not only our *Guide* and *Councillour*, but our *Assitant* too; and when he shews us the way, helps us also to overcome the difficulties of it: And this the *Apostle* fully and briefly expresses to us, when he tells us, *that the Spirit of God it is, which gives us both to will and to do.*

4thly. As he directs us in our actions, so he settles and confirms us in our good resolutions, and by that makes all Christian graces both easie to us and habitual. *By this good spirit of God (says St. Paul) we are sealed to the day of redemption; a Metaphor taken*

taken from the *binding* virtue that a *Seal* has, by which the Sealer is to which obliged to make good all those things it is annexed: Where therefore the *holy spirit* exercises this full and magisterial authority, by which all the Thoughts and Affections, all the Actions and Operations, are absolutely and intirely subjected to it; there is God's mark of *redemption* most eminently fixed, and they are registred amongst the number of *his redeemed Ones*. And therefore,

5thly. And lastly, By this *holy spirit* of God, we are assured of the *adoption* of Sons, a sense is created in us of God's *paternal care* towards us, and an earnest is given us of our everlasting inheritance. *We have not received the spirit of bondage* again to fear, *but we have received the spirit of adoption*, whereby we cry *Abba, Father*; the spirit it self bearing witness with our spirit that we are the *children of God*. This is that taste and antepast of that joy which shall be one day revealed, which made *St. Paul* desire to be dissolved, that he might pass into that heavenly country, where the lot was fallen to him in

The Fourth Sermon.

III

so fair a ground, and behold he had a goodly heritage. Blessed are the people who are in such a case! They may justly be said to enjoy a Heaven upon earth, as well as to have the earnest of one hereafter. Now this revealing to us the will of God, this condescending to dwell in us; this purifying our affections, and directing our actions; this confirming us in goodness, and securing us of everlasting happiness; do abundantly make out this doctrine of the *Apostle*, That *God the Holy Ghost is Love*.

And certainly, if every person of the immortal *Trinity* be so wonderful and amazing in its acts of *Love*, what shall we conceive of them, when we find them centered and united in *one God*? Will they not then, like the beams of the Sun contracted in a Burning-glass, shoot forth a greater warmth, and gain new vigor from that *Union*? The *Object* is too bright to dwell upon, and we can only say of the *Deity* in relation to *Man*, as the *Jews* did of our *Saviour* on the account of *Lazarus*, Behold how he loved him!

And

And now, wherewithall shall we come before the Lord, and bow our selves before the high God? What retribution shall we make unto the Lord; for all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, according to his mercies; and according to the multitude of his loving kindneses? The answer to this enquiry, which every grateful Soul is obliged to make, is the substance of the 2d. General of my Text.

2dly. Namely to shew what return is due from us to God, for these wonderful instances of his Love to us. And this I shall reduce under these two Heads, following therein the example of our *Apostle*:

1st. The Love of God to us obliges us to Love him; *Verse 19th.* of this same Chapter, we love him because he first loved us:

2dly. The Love of God to us obliges us to love one another. *V. 11th.* Beloved if God so loved us we ought also to love one another.

2 Cor.

I St. *John* IV. Chapter,
latter part of the 8th. v.

God is Love. 2d. Part.

I *Ng*ratitute is a sin of so black a dye, that even those whose nature is so base and depraved as to suffer them to act the *thing*; do yet want the impudence to own the *name*; no title being reputed so reproachful, as that of an *unthankful*, and *ungrateful* person: Now this consists in a wilfull neglecting to make such returns for benefits received, as we are qualified and enabled and required to make; and by how much the greater the advantages are, which have been conferred upon us; by so much the more ought we to strain our selves, to make proportionable acknowledgements and satisfaction:

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The *benefits* which we have received from *Almighty God* on the one side, in the signal and illustrious instances of his *Love* towards us, were the Subject of my *former Discourse* upon these words; the grateful *returns* which we are obliged to make on the other side, I design to insist upon at the present: And these, (at the latter end of that *former discourse*;) I reduced to these two Heads, following therein the example of our Apostle.

1st. That the Love of God to us obliges us to love him; v. 19. of the same Ch. *We love God because he first loved us.*

2^{dly}. That the Love of God to us obliges us to love one another; v. 11. *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

1st. Then, the love of God to us obliges us to love him: *we love God, because he first loved us.*

The obligation that lies upon us to Love God has been already sufficiently

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ently made out in my former Discourse upon this Subject, by the consideration of his inexpressible *Love* to us, in those great and wonderful works of our *Creation*, *Preservation*, *Redemption*, and *Sanctification*. The more useful enquiry will therefore be, to examine by what ways we ought to express this our *Love to God*: And in this I shall follow my foregoing method, by considering the returns to be made to each of these wonderful works of *Love*, severally and particularly: and such is the marvelous *goodness* of *Almighty God*, that in all the returns which he expects at our hands, he has jointly interwoven our *Profit* with our *Duty*, and made the *acknowledging* his benefits to be as advantageous to us, as the very *receiving* them.

1st. Then, we ought to *love God the Father*, for the great works of our *Creation* and *Preservation*; manifested and exemplified by these considerations, of the beauty of our outward Fabrick, the perfections of our Souls, and his watchful care in

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defending and preserving us; and we ought to *express* our Love to him after this manner. Has God *created* both our Souls and Bodies? Let us then worship him with *both* parts of his *divine workmanship*; let not those to which he has so undoubted a *right*, by *creating* them out of *nothing*, be *alienated* from his possession, or *delivered* up into the service of his Enemy. Has he made us but *little lower than the Angels*? Has he stamped upon our Countenances such a character of Majesty and Dominion? and *has he put all things in subjection under our feet*? Let us then maintain the *dignity* of our *Creation*; let us not *level* our selves with those who were created for our *subjects*; nor *unman* our selves by Sin and Folly; and by that greatest forfeiture of *our understanding*, become like *unto the beasts that perish*. Has God imprinted upon our Souls a resemblance of himself, and are we made after his own *Image*? Let us then preserve it sacred and undefaced: It is that *divine impression*, which like a *Prince's Stamp* upon the *basest mettall*, gives *value* to this Clay of ours, and makes

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makes even dust and ashes *great and considerable* ; take that away, and we shrink to the mean piece of our *intrinsic* worth ; and like a *Coin* cryed down, become *cheap and contemptible*. But farther, in relation to our daily *preservation* : Does God's wakeful providence continually *watch* over us, and does the keeper of Israel neither *slumber nor sleep* ? Let us then *resign up our selves into the hands of this our faithful Creator* ; let us absolutely and intirely cast our selves upon his protection, who is both able and willing to defend us. Then let our dangers be never so numerous and affrighting, let them appear never so unconquerable to our humane apprehensions ; if we but turn the *perspective*, and view them undertaken by an *all-sufficient* God, the difficulty vanishes, the apprehension lessens, and *all things will appear easie unto him with whom nothing is impossible*. Have the dispensations of his Providence been at any time sharp and severe towards us, and have we been *even consumed by means of his heavy hand* ? Let us remember, that he calls himself our *Father*, a name

too tender to carry *ruine* and *destruction* along with it ; he does but *chasten* us in *love* to work our *amendment* ; and when that end is once obtained, we shall soon perceive, that *God has not forgotten to be gracious, neither has he shut up his loving kindness in displeasure.* Let us in these *rougher* methods of our *preservation*, look on him as the great *Physitian* of our Souls and Bodies ; who whether he administers *Cordials* or *Causticks*, does it with that salutary design, of healing our Wounds, and curing our Infirmities. Thus should we manifest our *love to God the Father*, for his great *Love* to us, in the wonderful works of our *Creation* and *Redemption*.

2dly. We ought to *Love God the Son*, for the stupendous Miracle of our *Redemption* ; manifested and exemplified by these considerations, of the state of misery from whence we were released, the happy condition to which we are exalted, the wonderful methods of Providence in contriving our Redemption, and our Saviour's sufferings to compleat it ? And we ought to

to express our love to him after this manner. Was our estate so very miserable (as certainly it was) before this miracle of mercy redeemed us from it, and were we the *heirs of death and destruction*? Let us then take all imaginable care not to fall under the same sad circumstances again; a *relapse* (we know) is much more dangerous than the first fury of a *distemper*; and we read of the Man, *that washed and swept and garnished his house, and yet admitted seven Devils afterwards, that his last estate was worse than his first.* Were we fallen from our primitive perfection, and were we immersed in filth and corruption? Let this then work in us the highest degree of *Humiliation*, and a just sense of our own *unworthiness*; and whenever we find our selves puffed up with *self-conceitedness*, or *spiritual Pride*, let us look back upon the condition from whence we were delivered; and like the *Whip and Bell in the Chariot of the Triumpher*, it will give a shock to our greatest *Presumption*. But has God released us from the miseries we

groaned under, and exalted us into a state of Bliss and happiness? Let us then accept of these gracious overtures; let us lay hold upon the advantages proposed to us; and by duly improving the *means of Grace*, let us secure to our selves the *hope of glory*. Has God in his wonderful wildom and goodness, contrived so strange a method for our Salvation, and by such wonderful means reconcil'd together his Mercy and his Justice? Let us then not go about to frustrate the designs of his unbounded *mercy*, nor pry too nicely into the Secrets of his *Eternal Wisdom*; let us not endeavour to *counterplot* his *Omniſcience*, but with a just submission co-operate with him, *in whom we live and move and have our being*. Has the eternal God taken flesh upon him, has he born our iniquities and our afflictions, and been obedient to the *death, even the death of the cross*, for us miserable sinners? Let us then learn from his example, humility in all conditions, patience under the greatest sufferings, and obedience to the severest dispensations of our heavenly father; that by conforming our
selves

selves to his likeness, as he conformed himself to ours, we may avoid the dreadful *imputation*, of *making the Cross of Christ of none effect*. Thus should we manifest our love to God the Son, for his great Love to us, in the stupendous miracle of our *Redemption*.

3dly. We ought to love God the Holy Ghost, for the transcendent blessing of our *Sanctification*; manifested and exemplified by these considerations, of his dwelling within us, his revealing to us the will of God, his purifying our affections, and directing our actions, his confirming us in goodness, and securing us of everlasting Happiness: And we ought to *express our love* to him after this manner. Has the Holy and Immaculate Spirit of God condescended to dwell in us, and to consecrate our Hearts into a *Temple* for himself? Let us then keep it pure and undefiled, fit for so divine and spotless an Inhabitant; let us not convert it into a *Chapel* for the Devil; nor by the admission of inordinate Lusts and Affections, *turn this house of God*

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God into a Den of Thieves. Has he revealed unto us the will of God, and prepared our Souls for the reception of it? Let us then *draw water out of these Wells of Salvation*, let us lay aside all Pride and Prejudice, and receive *with meekness the ingrafted word which is able to save our Souls*. Does he work upon our corrupt affections, and *renew a right Spirit within us*, removing from our Souls *all inward filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness*? Let us then at least consent to our own cleansing; let us not *resist or quench the Spirit*, by stifling the good motions it inspires, or deviating from the Path which it prescribes. Does he strengthen and confirm us in good resolutions, and seal to us the promises of adoption and eternal felicity? Let us chearfully embrace so powerful an assistance, and joyfully lay hold upon such precious Advantages; let us not *grieve the good Spirit of God*, by which we are *sealed unto the day of redemption*; let us not fight and contend against him, and by so doing have the Character of *Jacob* applied to us in a much worse

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worse sense, that we *have wrestled with God and have prevailed*; and that we would not end our Contest, till instead of a *Blessing* we had made him leave a *Curse* behind him. Thus should we manifest our *love to God the Holy Ghost* for his great love to us, in the transcendent Blessing of our *sanctification*.

Having now run over the expressions of our love, to every *Person* of the sacred *Trinity*, for their *particular and peculiar instances* of love to us; let us next consider what returns of love must be made on our side, to that *One God*, in whom all these acts of love are jointly and together *center'd* and *united*. Now these demonstrations of our love towards God, must consist in the two great Duties of *Faith* and *Obedience*.

And 1st, The contemplation of *Gods love* to us, and a grateful return of love to him, must produce in us the grace of *Faith*.

We

We are always apt to believe the best things of those whom we really love ; and the excess on that side only is to be feared, when we settle our affections on things beneath : but this danger is wholly avoided, when God is the Object of our love : since the most exalted notions of perfection which we can possibly entertain, will fall short of him, and but faintly shadow forth his excellencies. By this we are easily induced to believe him *infinitely wise*, and therefore not capable to be *imposed* upon ; *infinitely good and loving* towards us, and therefore not willing to *impose* upon us : Thus have we gotten a firm and sure Foundation for our *Faith*, not only in relation to his *Nature and Attributes*, but to whatever else he shall be pleased to reveal to us ; and that, jointly founded upon these two *Pillars*, *God's love to us*, and *ours to him*. This will lead us through all the mazes of the Divine Providence ; and will convince us, that the same God, who *Created and Preserves*, did also *Redeem*, and does and will *sancti-*

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He us ; this will be to us an *Evidence* of those things which we have not seen, and so appropriate to us the *Blessing* pronounced to those who believe and have not seen. Thus this *Faith*, will not only be an argument and effect of our *love to God*, but an advancement of it also ; and encrease our *love* towards him, as well as manifest and express it.

But 2dly, The contemplation of *God's love* to us, and our grateful return of *love* to him, ought to produce in us *Obedience*.

We are easily perswaded, to comply with the desires and obey the commands, of those for whom we have a real and sincere affection ; but we are much more easily induced to it, if we are convinc'd that they seriously affect us ; being apt to believe justly, that nothing grievous will be imposed by them, and that their chief design is the consulting either our ease or our advantage : Now can we pretend to *love God*, or can we be believed real when we profess that *God loves*

loves us, if we are not willing to submit to his injunctions? Can we be said to believe him, if we will not acknowledge what he affirms, that his yoke is easie, and his burthen light? Or can we be said to love him, if we will not (for his sake) undergo that yoke, which we confess to be easie, and that burthen which we acknowledge to be light? We are told in the Parable in the Gospel, that they were the King's Enemies; which would not have him to reign over them; and shall he meet with as rough treatment in the House of his Friends? God forbid. God has sufficiently manifested his love to us, in the easiness of his impositions, and the vastness of his rewards; his commands are not grievous, neither does he take delight to make his Creatures miserable and uneasy: but as he has shewed his Love to us in this respect, so he expects that we should manifest ours to him, by the due observance of such reasonable injunctions. If you love me (says our Saviour) keep my Commandments: Obedience is the truest touchstone of affection; otherwise it is but an

an empty crying, *Lord, Lord*, which we are assured shall not avail for an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, unless we also do the Will of our Father which is in Heaven: and this as well as the foregoing Duty, will certainly improve our Love to God as well as manifest it, and also secure and confirm his love to us.

And thus much for the first general consequence of God's love to us, namely, That it obliges us to love him. We love him because he first loved us.

2dly. I proceed to the 2d general consequence; namely that the love of God to us, obliges us to love one another. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Love, (saith St. Paul) worketh no ill to his Neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law; that is to say, love worketh all manner of good to his Neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law; for since all those negative precepts in the Decalogue do also

also imply a *positive* duty to be performed; therefore when love is said to be the fulfilling of all these precepts, because *negatively* it works *no ill* to its Neighbour; it must necessarily follow, that love *positively* works all manner of good to its Neighbour, and by so *doing* is the fulfilling of the Law.

Now this love of one another must be expressed these two ways.

1st. In shewing Charity to one anothers *Souls*.

2^{dly}. In shewing Charity to one anothers *Bodies*.

1st. Then, The *love of God* to us obliges us to shew *Charity* to the *Souls* of one another.

Nothing is more precious in the sight of God than the Soul of Man; which we may sufficiently gather, by the vastness of the price he was contented to pay, to redeem it from Perdition: we cannot therefore better
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manifest our *love to God*, than by using all possible endeavours to preserve or retrieve that which is so valuable in his Eyes. Tho' it may perhaps be thought by some, that this sort of Charity is only proper to the *Ministry*, and that the Laity may be excused: yet my Beloved, it is the Duty of every Christian, though it may be ours more *peculiarly*, and no true *Believer* can plead an exemption from it. This therefore we are *all* obliged to attempt, and that by some or all these following methods.

1st. By our *Example*.

2^{dly}. By our *Exhortations*.

3^{dly}. By our *Reprehensions*.

4^{thly}. By our *Prayers*.

1st Then, we are obliged to shew Charity to one anothers Souls by our *Example*.

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A good Example is the most powerful exhortation, and a vertuous Life and Conversation is a continual living instruction. To advise others to those things which we do not practice our selves, if it does not call in question the truth of our assertion, does at least break the force of our Arguments, and convince us of unsincereness. We are led by the Eye much better than by the Ear, as it is elegantly spoken by the Poet—*Segnius irritant animum demissa per aures, Quam quæ sunt Oculis subjecta fidelibus, & quæ ipse sibi tradit spectator.*——

The Sight (says he) is both the most quick and most faithful instructour. By the Hearing we believe others; but by this we give credit to our selves.——— *Sivis me flere dolendum est Primum ipsi tibi*——— (says the same Poet) Our affections are wrought upon by what we discern in others; and the way to produce like sentiments in any one, is first to shew the effect of them in our selves. But we have a much greater and more powerful Authority than this, even
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that of our blessed Saviour himself ;
*Let your light so shine before men that
they may see your good works, and glo-
rifie your Father which is in Heaven ;*
it is by seeing the true works of good
Believers that others will be induc-
ed to give glory unto God. This
therefore is the first way of shewing
Charity to the Souls of one another,
by our good *Example* ; a duty the
more indispensable, because we are
not only obliged to live well upon
the account of our *Neighbours*, but
also in relation to God and to our
selves.

2dly. We are obliged to shew *Cha-
rity* to one anothers *Souls* by our *Ex-
hortations*.

Though Examples are generally
more prevalent than Precepts ; yet
both together are more available than
either of them afunder. *Let us* (says
the Author to the Hebrews) *consider
one another, to provoke to love and good
works ; not forsaking the assembling of
our selves together, as the manner of
some is, but exhorting one another. We*

are all of us too too apt to forget our duty, too liable to failings and omissions, and cannot too often be stirred up and put in mind of it. It is recorded as a great piece of wisdom in King *Philip*, that least his prosperous Estate should too far puff him up, he ordered one of his Attendants frequently to put him in mind of his *Mortality*, with this expression, *O King, Thou must die*. And certainly there is not any one amongst us, but stands in great need of such a *Remembrancer*: The temptations of the *World*, the lusts of the *Flesh*, and the wiles of *Satan*, give us too too many avocations from our duty; and it is hard, very hard, for us of our selves to get loose from them, without the assistance and pious admonition of some Christian Friend concerned for our salvation. As therefore it is the duty of every Christian, to shew himself such a Friend upon occasion, so also it is the interest of every one, to provide himself of some such charitable and friendly adviser; who may by his seasonable and religious exhortations, quicken him when he
grows

grows dull, waken him when he grows drowzy, and encourage him when he is lively and vigorous, in the exercise and practice of those Christian Graces which become a true Believer. And this is the 2^d way of shewing *Charity* to the *Souls* of one another, by our Advice and *Exhortations*.

3^{dly}. We are obliged to shew *Charity* to one anothers *Souls* by our *Reprehenfions*.

He that truly consults the welfare of his Brothers Soul, must not only advise him to that which is good, but also reprehend him for that which is evil: Thus the Apostle exhorts us *to reprove and to rebuke*, and the Prophet assures us, that by so doing, if we cannot prevail upon the wicked to forsake his evil ways, yet at least we have delivered our own Souls. And this must be done without *Partiality* and with *meekness*; without *partiality*, in not sparing or countenancing that darling Sin, that *Bosom* iniquity which he may be most fond of,

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which he may be willing to extenuate, and to say of it, (as *Lot* did of *Zoar*) *is it not a little one?* This must be painted out in its natural deformity, and displayed in its most ugly colours ; according to the Example of the *Royal Psalmist*, who testifies of himself, *I said to the fools, deal not so madly ; and to the ungodly, set not up your horn.* But as this must be done without partiality, so must it also be performed with meekness. If a man be overtaken in a fault, (says *St. Paul*) *ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.* Καταλιζετε τὸν τοιούτον, set such a Man in joynt ; a Metaphor taken from the duty of a Surgeon, in setting right a dislocated Member, which is to be performed with the greatest tenderness and gentleness imaginable. And this is the 3^d way of shewing Charity to the Souls of one another, by our Rebukes and Reprehensions.

4^{thly}. We are obliged to shew Charity to one anothers Souls by our Prayers.

When

When we have done all that we can to reclaim our Brother, if we find him proof against the Majesty of *Example*, against mild *Exhortations*, and seasonable *Reprehensions*; we must then turn him over to the mercy of God, and recommend him to his Grace by *prayer* and *supplication*: and this we are taught to do in that excellent form of Prayer, which our Saviour left as a Pattern for our devotions; wherein the large and universal Charity of a Christian, is most fully and clearly described and exemplified; no one Petition being offered up, barely and particularly for our selves; but all our addresses being diffusive and general, and the whole race of Mankind being comprehended in them. And this is the 4th and last way of shewing *Charity* to the *Souls* of one another, by our *prayers* in their behalf: and if by none of these means we can benefit them, yet at least we have discharged our own duty, and made an acceptable return to the love of God.

Having thus taken care to secure to one another the *Kingdom of Heaven and the Righteousness thereof*, by shewing *Charity* to the Souls of our Brethren; we must then endeavour (as far as we can) *that all other even Worldly things may be added to them*, and therefore,

2dly. We are obliged by our consideration of the *love* of God to us, to shew *Charity* to the *Bodies* of one another,

He that hath this Worlds good, and seeth his Brother have need, and shutteth up his Bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (says the beloved *Apostle*) where according to the *Idiom* of the Original Language, that *Question* implies a strong *Negation*; as if he should have said, *The love of God dwelleth not at all in him.* We do but idly and vainly pretend to *love* God, unless we manifest it by *Charity* to our distressed Brethren; and the same *Apostle* pronounces him a *lyar*, *Who says he loves God,*

God, and hates his Brother ; for he who loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen. Now this love is dead and insignificant, unless exemplified by Actions of mercy and kindness. If a Brother or Sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding you impart not those things which be needful for the Body, what doth it profit, No my beloved Brethren, pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widow in their affliction ; the word is ἐπιμενέμεναι, which signifies not only a bare looking on, but a considering and relieving with mercy and compassion ; as it is also used in the 1st of St. Luke, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people. In the account of the last Judgment, given us by St. Matthew in the 25th Ch. of his Gospel, the whole Indictment against the Reprobates is drawn up for the non-performance of charitable offices to their distressed Brethren, not cloathing the naked, nor feed-
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ing the hungry, nor visiting the sick, and such like ; the omission of these practical duties and expressions of brotherly love, being the only thing insisted upon as the occasion, of their great and dreadful condemnation : and this most certainly to any considering Person, will strongly enforce the exercise of those duties, and engage us, if God so love us, to love also one another. I therefore beseech you earnestly in the Bowels of the Lord Jesus, that at all times and upon all occasions, ye will bountifully extend your Christian Charity, to the Souls and Bodies of one another. That so when we shall appear before the great Tribunal, we may be of the number of those, to whom the King shall say, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick and ye visited me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me : For verily (as he subjoins immediately after) I say unto you, in as much

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as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me. To this blessed commendation and character, God (of his infinite mercy) give us all a Title, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our ever blessed *Saviour*, who *loved* us, and laid down his Life for us, and commanded us to love *God and one another*. To him with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now and for ever more. Amen.

2 Cor.

John 16. Chap. latter part
of the 22. Verse.

*And your joy no Man taketh
from you.*

THese words were designed
by our Blessed Saviour, as an
Antidote against that just and
violent affliction ; which
had seized the Spirits of his disconso-
late Apostles, upon the Prospect of
being deprived of their Lord and Ma-
ster : They were just informed by him
who was *Truth* it self, that *the De-
light of their Eyes, and Joy of their
Hearts*, should be torn from them and
lead away to a shameful Execution :
That

That he from whom they expected all the pretious advantages, which *Man* could possess or God bestow; should in a short time leave them friendless and defenceless, exposed to the malice of *Men* and *Devils*: That he whose *followers* they had boasted themselves to be, and placed all their glory in that *Honourable Relation*; should entail upon them a Legacy of Sufferings and Ignominy, so that whosoever killed them should think he did God service: This unexpected news was of so dismal a nature, that we cannot wonder to find them dispirited and dejected, and that because of these things sorrow had filled their hearts: For what circumstances can be imagined more deplorable than theirs! And how rich and sovereign must that *Cordial* be, which could revive and support them under so sharp a Tryal? No power less than that which could raise Light out of Darknes, could be able to guild with any beams of comfort, a condition so gloomy and unpromising as this: He therefore that gave the wound, as only able to do it pours in the Balsome; assuring them immediately that never-
theless

theless, notwithstanding they were so apprehensive of the consequences of his depature, *it was expedient for them that he should go from them*: What, can the loss of a *Saviour* redound to their advantage? Can any thing make amends for that cruel separation, of which they are scarce able to bear the very mention? Can it *be Expedient* to have *Him* ravished from them, in whose possession they had placed their chiefest happiness? They had need of *all* their *Faith* to make this assertion credible, which seemed so contradictory to their *Reason* and their *Duty*: He therefore goes on to explain himself more fully, by promising that *he will send the Comforter unto them*; which could not be imparted before he had left them, because jointly proceeding from the *Father* and himself: That this divine *Comforter* being the *spirit* of *Consolation*, should cause their hearts to overflow with unspeakable delight; and should drown the remembrance of all their past sorrows, in those ravishing entertainments which they should then experience: 'Tis true indeed, the *bodily* presence of
their

their Lord was justly valued by them; but that was an enjoyment which they could not long possess, because the Eternal Decrees of God's *Justice* and his *Mercy*, had empowered wicked Men to deprive them of it; but he would be present to their *Souls* by the influence of his *Spirit*; they should hold *this* advantage to the end of the World, by a tenure unalterable and indefeisable; and it should produce in them not only such a joy as was full, but such a one as no Man should be able to take from them. And your joy no Man taketh from you.

In my following Discourse upon which words, I shall observe this plain and easie method.

1st. I shall enquire into the nature of *Spiritual Joy*; and shew wherein its Eminency and Perfection consists, above any other delight whatsoever. And

2^{dly}. I shall lay down some necessary directions, in order to our attainment of this *Spiritual Joy*.

I. The

I. Then I shall enquire into the nature of *Spiritual Joy* ; and shew wherein its Eminency and Perfection consists, above any other delight whatsoever.

Spiritual Joy, is a solemn but chearful habit of the Soul, produced in us by the operation of the Holy Ghost ; by which we are convinced of the goodness of our God, and entertain a modest but steadfast assurance of his favour ; as finding our selves entitled to his protection here, and to the eternal fruition of him hereafter. When I say, it is a solemn habit of the Soul : I do so to exclude from my present subject, all idle and extravagant raptures of *Enthusiasme* ; which transport Men sometimes by fits and starts, but leave them afterwards as heavy and lifeless as before ; and are no more to be looked upon as the effects of *Spiritual Joy* ; than the excessive laughter of a Fool or a Madman, is to be esteemed the result of a reasonable satisfaction : when I assert that it is produced by the operation of the Holy Ghost ; I intend to distinguish it from that calmness and tranquility of mind, which may arise

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from an affluence of *temporal* enjoyments ; when our *Corn* and our *Wine* and our *Oyle* encrease, and we meet with no disappointments to ruffle or discompose us ; which however is as different from this *Spiritual Joy*, being oftentimes their lot who have their portion in *this* life ; as the causes of the one are from the occasions of the *other*, or the *Blessings* of God's *left-hand* from those of his *right* : When I add that we are convinced by it of the goodness of God, and have a modest but steadfast assurance of his favour ; as finding our selves entitled to his protection here, and to the eternal fruition of him hereafter ; I strike at the fond confidence of the *Atheistical* and *Profane* ; who having hardened their hearts against the terrors of the Lord, and opened them to the admittance of all *sensual delights* ; lull themselves at ease in a fancied security, and boast to have extracted the very quintessence of delight ; when their pretended quiet is but like the sleep of a *Lethargick*, a disease rather than a refreshment ; and their forced mirth has nothing more substantial than his, who is stung with a *Tarantula* and dies laughing. That joy then whose nature

I am endeavouring to explain, and which is stilled in Sacred Writ the joy of the Holy Ghost; has God for its Author, his Perfections and Promises for its Object; Constancy and Sobriety for its inseparable Companions, and a well-grounded Hope for its immovable foundation: It is seated in the very Center of the Soul, not liable to be affected by any outward commotions; it draws its original from an unexhausted fountain, which can never fail to furnish it with sufficient supplies; it dilates the Soul to its utmost extent, and enlarges it to take in as much of Heaven, as it is capable of receiving on this side the Grave; it fixes the Eye of the Understanding, upon the inimitable Attributes of our Almighty Benefactor, and finds fresh occasions for us of rejoicing in them all; whether we adore his impartial Justice, or lay hold upon his infinite Goodness, or admire his unconceivable Wisdom, or confide in his unalterable Truth, or depend upon his boundless Power; we feel our Joy encrease upon each several consideration, and we are comforted by them on every side: It leads us up (with Moses) to the

top of Mount *Nebo*, and gives us a *Pisgah-sight* of the heavenly *Canaan*; but with this happy difference on our side, that we do not (like him) barely *feast* our *Eyes* upon it, but are assured we shall *enjoy* that *Land of Promise*; it puts our spirits into a motion that is generous and lively, and kindles up a *temperate* and *regular* zeal within us; not imitating by its disorderly *intermitting heats*, the *unhealthful burnings* of an *Ague* or a *Fever*; but resembling by its *constant* and *moderate warmth*, that *vital fire* which duly *cheers* the body, and keeps it *always* in a posture of *vigour* and *alacrity*. There are three recommending qualifications, eminently discernable in *this spiritual joy*; which are not equally to be met with in any other kind of delight, and which give it the preference very far before them.

1st. The *Nobleness* of its *Extraction*.

2^{dy}. Its own *intrinsic worth* and *Excellency*.

3^{dy}. Its *Constancy* and *Continuance*.

The

The first advantage which this Joy of the Holy Ghost, possesses above all other delights and satisfactions, is the Nobleness of its Extraction. It was the fond ambition of the ancient Heathens, to run up their Pedigree to some Demi-God or Heroe, though they sullied the descent by Incest or Illegitimacy; and the pretending to an Original above the common level, is a vanity which is authorized by the practice of most men living; but Spiritual Joy in an unblemished line, derives it self from the great Majesty of Heaven and Earth; God the Father, through the merits and intercession of God the Son, imparts it to us by God the Holy Ghost, and every person of the Trinity is concerned in its production: The love of God is its immediate forerunner, as the Apostle has truly ranked the fruits of the spirit, which are first love and then joy; such a perfect love as casts out all fear, but what is filial and reverential; and gives a ready admittance to a true Christian Hope, with all its comfortable train of wishes and expectations. But as Spiritual Joy is of heavenly extract, so all other delights take

their *rise* much *lower* ; the *Honours* or the *Pleasures* or the *Riches* of this world, are the contemptible scoures from which they are derived ; and he that owes all his satisfaction to such *empty trifles*, must blush to be beholding to things so much beneath him : from the *earth* they sprung, and to the *earth* they must return again, and seldom do they fail to drag us down thither with them ; whilst the *Joy* that is *Heaven-born*, ascends naturally to *Heaven*, and bears us up along with it to those *Mansions of Eternity*. A

2d. Qualification by which *this Spiritual Joy*, is distinguished by way of eminence from all other delights and satisfactions, is its own *intrinsic worth* and *Excellency*. Custom has oblig'd us to pay an outward civility, to those that can derive themselves from an *honourable parentage* ; but unless they can support this esteem by some *personal good qualities*, it is apt to fall off and degenerate into *contempt* ; and if *this spiritual joy* of which we are now treating, had nothing to set it off but its *Celestial Original*, we might easily

fly be induced to *undervalue* and *neglect* it; but the case is here much otherwise; it appears most *worthy* of its *divine extraction*, and commands our respect by its *own proper excellency*. No other delight can so *fill* the Soul, so satisfy the largeness of its *noble capacities*; the most refined *sensual* pleasures leave the mind *unsatisfied*, and in quest of something which it does *not find it self possessed of*; they play upon us with *false* representations, and raise the appetite by *deceitful* appearances; but are not able to *content* it with their empty enjoyments, or to answer the *Ideas* which were misconceived of them; whereas *spiritual joy* is so *excellent* in its nature, that it gives *perfect contentment* to all our *faculties*, and leaves the Soul nothing more in this world to wish for or desire. And as it thus *affords* us all that we can *aim at*, so does it also *defend* us from whatever we may *apprehend*; it is an armour of proof against all dangers and difficulties; an impregnable fortress to which the Soul may retreat, and be secure against all evils and calamities that can assault it; it

The Sixth Sermon.

makes *poverty* and *sickness* and *captivity* become easie to us, and disarms *Death* it self of its Sting and Terrour ; For as it had no dependance upon the things of this world for its production, so there is nothing in this world that can give it any disturbance. But how small and inconsiderable a matter on the other side, can give a check to the most *exquisite* of *sensual* delights ? If the *Body* be *indisposed*, the *senses* cannot divert us ; if the *mind* be *disordered*, the *World* cannot entertain us ; a *melancholly reflection* or a pang of a *disease*, shall render all the *satisfactions* of the *Great* the *Rich* or the *Luxurious*, most wretchedly *tasteless* and *insipid* ; whilst that *Joy* which is *Spiritual* by its *native excellency*, swallows up and conquers all those uneasinesses ; which are able to overcome the greatest *temporal* enjoyments, and turn *their* entertainments into *vexation of spirit*. Add to this the *Regret* which is consequent to the *one*, and that *serenity* of mind which is the attendant of the *other* ; and we cannot but confess that the *latter* of these, is vastly preferable to the *former*, upon the account

account of its *intrinsic worth and excellency*. A

3d. Advantage which commends to us *this joy of the Holy Ghost*, above all other delights or satisfactions whatsoever, is that of its *constancy and continuance*. When we are possessed of any thing that is truly valuable, and cannot tell how soon it may be ravished from us; the *fear of losing* balances the *pleasure of possessing*, and palls in a great measure the relish of the enjoyment; but if we are convinced that we cannot be deprived of it, the Soul acquiesces in that assurance, and our satisfaction is free from any mixture or Alloy: Thus is it with *that joy* which *descends to us from above*, when we have once attained to it we can never be dispossessed of it; it will accompany us through this life, and attend us into the *other*; and like a *River* that discharges its self into the *Sea*, will insensibly mingle with that *Ocean of delight*, which *overflows and makes glad the City of our God*: The Soul is beyond the reach of any outward calamities; and *this spiritual joy* being seated

feated in *That*, can never be impaired by any sufferings of the *Body*; it can buoy up the mind in the midst of persecutions, and tire out the malice of the most cruel Adversaries; amongst *storms* and *tempests* it still remains *unshaken*, being kept steady by *Hope* that *Anchor of the Soul*. But how uncertain and *precarious* must our title be, to any of those *delights* which the *world* can administer! they ly at the mercy of a thousand accidents, and we cannot ensure them for a *day* or an *hour*: a well formed calumny, or malicious accusation, or ill grounded *suspicion*, may reduce a *great man* to the level of the *vulgar*; a *loss* at *Sea*, or a *fire* at *home*, or an *invasion* from *abroad*, may consign over the *wealthiest* person to *rags* and *beggary*; *Old Age* or a *disease* may disable the *Epicure*, and render all the delights of *sense* *irksome* and *unpalatable*; and *Conscience* which is seldom well at ease in such *Worldlings*, will be apt to dash their jollity with its inward lashes; or *Death* at last will certainly put an end to their merriment, with the dreadfulness of its approaches and the horreur of its consequences;

sequences ; Thus will all the empty *Vanities* of *this world*, drop off and fall away like the leaves in *Autumn* ; whilst that joy which is inspired by the *Holy Ghost*, shall look green like a *Palm-tree*, and spread abroad like a *Cedar in Libanus* ; and having been planted by the hand of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of the house of our God. Thus have I enquired into the nature of *Spiritual Joy*, and shewn wherein its Eminency and Perfection consists, above any other delight whatsoever : it will be requisite for us now, to inform our selves in the next place of the means and methods ; by which we may arrive at so precious an advantage, at the possession of *this joy which no man can take from us*. And this leads me to the consideration of my.

2d. Particular ; in which I proposed to lay down some necessary directions, in order to our attainment of *this Spiritual Joy*. And.

1st. In order to our attainment of *Spiritual Joy*, let us endeavour to implant within our minds a just *Notion* and

and *Idea* of the *Divine Nature*. We must not (as it is the unhappiness of some melancholy tempters) entertain *frightful conceptions* of God and his *Attributes*, but such as may engage us to love him and to rejoyce in his *Presence*: We must not represent him to our selves as a *Tyrant* or *Task-master*, who severely exacts a slavish obedience; but as a *merciful Prince* and *munificent Benefactor*, who in his commands and dispensations consults our *truest interest*: As we adore his *Justice* in taking vengeance upon his *Enemies*, so must we consider, that a full satisfaction has been made to it for us, by which we are admitted into the number of his *Friends*: when we acknowledge his *Truth* in relation to his threatnings against sinners, we must also depend upon it in relation to his *promises*: as we magnifie his *Wisdom*, which discovers all our *errours*; so must we bless the allowances which it gives, for the *frailties* and *infirmities* of our nature: When we think upon his *Power*, by which he does *whatsoever pleases him*; we must hope that it is ready to be exerted in our *favour*, so that we need not fear
what

what man can do unto us: And we must let the contemplation of his infinite goodness run through our meditation upon all his other *Attributes*; till our knowledge that as his Majesty so is his Mercy; disperses our fears, confirms our hopes, and sheds abroad within our Souls, that peace of God which passes all understanding. In a word, God is a Father, a Relation the most endearing; Christ is a Redeemer, an Office the most engaging; the Holy Ghost is a Comforter, an employment the most obliging; and what can we find in all these characters, but what may cultivate and improve our *Spiritual Joy*? But,

2dly, In order to our attainment of this joy of the Holy Ghost, let us seriously apply our selves to fill our minds, with sound and true conceptions of Religion. Religion however mistaken or misrepresented by some, is the most entertaining thing in nature; attended by a good Conscience, which is a continual refreshment; and supported by the assurance of God's favour and protection, which is the most certain fund of comfort

comfort and satisfaction : If we take her *Portraiture* from the *Life*, she will appear as bright and beautiful as an *Angel* ; set off with all those Graces and ravishing Attractions, which may most powerfully recommend her to our Affections ; allowing and encouraging the truest chearfulness, and not clashing with or contradicting any innocent delights : And therefore nothing has done her a greater prejudice, nothing has more hindered her diffusiveness and efficacy ; than the *false draughts* made of her by some sort of people, who would have her to consist in *moroseness and austerity* ; They dress her up *dismally* like a *Fury* or a *Fiend* ; they arm her with *Snakes* and *Whips* and *Firebrands* ; and having thus made her an *Object* of *loathing* and *aversion*, they pretend to *recommend* her under so *frightful* an *appearance* : But if we resolve to *linen* her after this *hideous* manner, we shall neither pursue her with any heartiness, nor be sensible of *that Joy* which she is capable of imparting ; and if she were such a *melancholy Mistress* as this, I should not so much wonder at the small number

of

of her *Votaries*. But the *Royal Prophet* gives a far differing account of her, when he tells us, that the *Statutes of the Lord are the rejoycing of his heart*; that they are more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold; sweeter also than the hony and the hony-comb: The *Apostle* gives us a nobler Idea of her, when he bids us *rejoice in the Lord ever more*, and again he says *rejoyce*: And therefore they who would confine her to *pensiveness* and *sourness*, do either mistake *Hypocrisie* or *Superstition* for her; or else judge of *Religion* by their own *Constitution*, not accommodate their *humours* to the nature of *Religion*: That teaches us to love God, to depend upon him, and to be conversant in such actions as will encline him to love us; to be easie under all the vicissitudes of this life, and to press forwards towards the prize of our high calling in the other. Such notions of *Religion* will perswade us to love it, that love will engage us to delight in its practice; and those practices will by consequence be highly instrumental, to the production and advancement of our *Spiritual Joy*. But,

3dly. In

3dly. In order to the attainment of *this Spiritual Joy*, let us frequently meditate upon the *recompence of our reward*, and the comfortable *promises* made to us in the *Gospel*. When our thoughts are often fixed upon the *Regions of Immortality*; and we contemplate with an eye of *Faith*, the *inexpressible glory* of that *Land of Spirits*; when *wreaths of victory*, and *Robes of Light*, and *Crowns of Righteousness*, are the beautiful *Objects* that entertain our imagination; when these *material Heavens* seem drawn aside like a *Curtain*, and disclose the ineffable secrets of the *Holiest of Holies*; when we pierce *through the veil* and view God upon his *Throne*, cloathed with *Infinite Majesty* and *Insupportable Brightness*; the *Angels* attending to execute his Will, and singing *Allelujahs* to the golden harps of God; the *Spirits of just Men* intermixt among them, in all the *perfection* that *humane nature* can attain to; when we represent usually to our minds, a *light* that far transcends the *lustre of the Sun*; and consider the *Riches* of the *New Jerusalem*, whose
Gates

Gates and Foundation are of Pretious Stones ; What heart can refrain from being ravished with delight, at a Prospect so agreeable and entertaining as this ? But when we add the consideration that this is our Inheritance ; that we are Candidates and Probationers for such inestimable advantages ; that we have a title to enter into this joy of our Lord, if we take care to do well as good and faithful Servants ; that we are positively assured by the Gospel of our Saviour, which every where abounds with glad tidings of great joy ; That this eternal repository of bliss and happiness, was prepared for the faithful, from the foundation of the world ; when thus we lay hold upon Heaven by Faith, anticipate the possession of it by hope, and qualify our selves for the enjoyment of it by Charity ; what a self sufficient spring of inward rejoicing, as refreshing as the waters of the river of Life ; must overflow our Souls, drown all our sorrows, and become a constant fountain of spiritual joy within us !
But,

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4thly. And

4thly. And lastly, In order to our attainment of this *joy of the Holy Ghost*, let us take care that we be conversant in the duties of our profession. Notwithstanding all the *notions* which we ought to entertain, of the *graciousness* and loving *kindness* of our Heavenly Father ; notwithstanding the *Ideas* we should raise within our minds, of the *easiness* and *delightfulness* of the *Christian Religion* ; notwithstanding all the *satisfaction* we may justly take, in the *contemplation* of *Heaven* and the *promises* relating to it ; yet must we remember , that *God* expects an *Obedience* to be paid, that *Religion* requires some *duties* to be performed, and that *Heaven* cannot be *purchased* nor the *promises applied*, without regard to some *conditions* to which they are annexed : And therefore whatever *pleasure* we may be sensible of, upon such *sweet* and *comfortable* reflections as these ; yet can it not be *genuine* and *sincere*, unless we find it accompanied with an *additional joy*, arising from the *practice* of our *Christian Duties*. In *Prayer* we *converse* familiarly with *God*, and keep
up

up (as it were) a *correspondence* with him; by which we daily discover *fresh perfections* in him; in him, we hourly receive *fresh Blessings* from him; and find a due encrease upon each occasion, both of our *Love* towards him and our *rejoycing* in him: Our *praise* is an employment the most *delightful* of any, the constant entertainment of the *Church Triumphant*, and the homage of of those Saints which *shine in glory*; and this can never fail (if we discharge it heartily,) to fill our minds with *Celestial Pleasures*, and improve and encrease our *devotion* and our *Joy*: The several *Practical Duties* of our holy Vocation, have every one the *promises* of a *reward* joined to them; they are made *easy* and *pleasant* by the consideration of their *recompence*; and the performance of them gives us *peace of Conscience*, which is the inseparable companion of *Spiritual Joy*: Thus every *act of Piety*, every *office of Devotion*, has a necessary tendency towards our attainment, of *righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*: He therefore that attends upon the *exercises* of Religion, takes the surest method to possess himself of

that Joy, which no man shall be able to take from him.

If then *spiritual Joy* has such a *Noble Extraction*; being immediately derived from God himself: if it is *highly excellent* in its own nature; and free from all danger of being *lessened* or *destroyed*: if (I say) it has such *valuable qualifications* to recommend it; how earnestly should we endeavour for the *attainment* of *that*, which is set off by advantages so considerable as *these* ! Especially since the method by which we may acquire it, carries nothing that is *difficult* or *uneasie* along with it ! It is only necessary, that we should think *honourably* of God, and *reasonably* of Religion; that we should meditate upon *Heaven* and the *hopes* which we have of it; and by exercising the *Duties* of our *Holy Profession*, walk worthy of the *Vocation* wherewith we are called. Then will God's Spirit overshadow our Souls, and produce in them the blessed fruit of *spiritual consolation*; and *this joy of the Holy Ghost* which no man taketh from us, shall refresh our spirits here, till it discharges it self hereafter, into that
Abyss

The Sixth Sermon.

165

*Abyss of delight which has neither shore
nor bottom.*

*To which God of his infinite mercy,
&c.*

M 3

Psalm.

The Sixth Sermon.

He of which has neither form
nor bottom.

The which God of his infinite mercy

Psalm

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**Pſalm 111. the former part
of the laſt Verſe.**

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wiſdom ; a good under-
ing have all they that do his
Commandments.*

IN this corrupt Age, wherein *A-
theiſm* and *Irreligion*, are looked
upon as the reſult of a *judicious
thoughtfulneſs* ; when to profeſs
and maintain that *there is, no God*, is the
peculiar character of the *Knowing* and
Ingenious ; and *David's Fool* is grown
our *Wiſeman* ; when *Vertue* and *Piety*
are laugh'd out of countenance, as
the *abſurd Concluſions* of *unſkillful rea-
ſoners*, or the *idle dreams* of the *fanciſul*

and *inconsiderate* ; it is abundantly necessary to combat those loose Principles, which support an opinion so dangerous and destructive ; to assert *Religion* into its just esteem ; and to remove a prejudice so likely to undermine it ; by proving that *Godliness* is the truest *Prudence*, and that *Wisdom* and *Piety* go hand in hand.

This was a truth so universally received, and so firmly assented to by the sacred Writers ; that we find them make use of *Wisdom* and *Holiness*, *Folly* and *Unrighteousness*, as terms *Synonymous*, or differing expressions of the same thing ; and they imply thus much in the language of the Scriptures, *an agreement with, or deviation from, the laws and dictates of natural light, and uncorrupted Reason, cultivated and improved by divine Revelation*. In this sense they may most frequently be met with, in the works of *King Solomon* and the *Royal Prophet* ; the former of whom has composed an intire Book, to make out this great and useful Assertion, *That the righteous man is the only wise man, and that no fool is comparable to the sinner*

sinner : and the *latter* assures us, (in many other places as well as in the words of my Text) That he who has not a due *notion* of *God*, is still in a state of *Ignorance* and *Folly*, he has not so much as entered upon the first *Elements* of *knowledge* ; since the *fear* of the *Lord* is the *beginning* of *Wisdom* ; and a good *understanding* have all they (and they only) that do his *Commandments*.

In my following Discourse upon which words, I shall endeavour to make out the truth, of these two considerable Propositions.

1. That *Speculative Piety*, or a due *knowledge* of *God* and of our duty towards him, is the *first foundation* of true *Wisdom* : The *fear* of the *Lord* is the *beginning* of *wisdom*.

2dly. That *Practical Piety*, or the regulating of our *actions* according to this *knowledge*, is the height and perfection of *understanding* : A good *understanding* have all they that do his *Commandments*.

1. Then

1st. Then, I shall endeavour to prove, that *Speculative Piety*, or a due *knowledge of God*, and of our duty towards him, is the first *foundation* of true *Wisdom*; That *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*.

For the clearer illustration of which point of Doctrine, give me leave to lay down the following Conclusions.

1st. That the proper exercise of true *Wisdom* consists, in directing and conducting us to the chiefest happiness, which humane nature is capable of attaining.

2^{dly}. That *Religion* is the only method, by which we are directed and conducted, towards the attainment of this chief happiness.

3^{dly}. That a due *knowledge of God* and of our duty towards him, is the *Basis* and *Ground-work* of true *Religion*.

And

And if these three Conclusions are of uncontestable certainty, which it shall be my business fully to evince, they abundantly verifie my first Proposition, That *Speculative Piety*, or a due knowledge of God and of our duty towards him, is the first foundation of true *Wisdom*; That the fear of the Lord is the beginning of *Wisdom*. And,

1. The proper exercise of true *Wisdom* consists, in directing and conducting us to the chiefest happiness, which humane nature is capable of attaining.

It is below the dignity, and unbecoming the character of a *Wise man*, to amuse himself with mean and trivial advantages, whilst he has the prospect and assurance of such as are much higher: *Wisdom* makes him try and examine all things, and pass a true and unerring Judgment upon them: it enables him to discern appearances from realities, and hinders him from chusing a less good in Exchange for a greater: It directs him to the knowledge of himself and his capacities; and having first taught him to fathom the

the depth of his own abilities, and to judge how much happiness he is able to contain ; it then sets him to work for the compassing those enjoyments, without which his large Soul can never be well satisfied. This is a qualification so indispensable, in order to deserve the commendation of *Prudence*, that the short lesson of *Γνωθι σεαυτὸν* or *understand thy self*, was thought sufficient to rank its Author, amongst the seven celebrated *Sages* of *Greece* ; and he who is unprovided of this advantage, although he has all manner of *other knowledge*, may perhaps be called a *learned* person, but can never be justly stiled a *Man of Wisdom* : Since *that* must oblige him to study his *own nature*, to reflect upon the Perfections and Endowments of *that*, and thence to infer, that there is something to be aimed at by him, which may bear a proportion to those refined qualities, by which he is distinguished from the list of common Creatures. *Wisdom* then will not suffer him lazily to take up, with *sensual delights* or the *felicity* of a *Brute* ; but spurs him on to the pursuit of more *exalted entertainments*, such as are suitable

ble to the *dignity* of a *rational Creature*; it informs him, that he is a *Man*, not a *Beast*; and that his *Reason* can never be treated agreeably, with such things as are only the gratifications of his *Senses*: It inclines him to aim at a more *elevated* happiness, such as may leave him nothing to wish for or desire; and which by filling his capacities in their utmost extent, may possess him of all that his nature can arrive at. This is that *chief* and *Sovereign good*, which was proposed by all the antient *Philosophers*, as the end and scope of all their actions, and that to which they directed their most passionate endeavours; but which however they all fell short of, because they had no other guidance but that of *natural Reason*, without the necessary assistances of *Faith* and *Revelation*. And therefore.

2dly. *Religion* (I say) is the only method, by which we are directed and conducted, towards the attainment of this chief happiness.

Though

Though the principles of *humane Wisdom* and *natural Knowledge*, convinced the more prudent and considerate *Heathens*, that there was one eminent ultimate *End*, to which they were to press forwards with the greatest industry ; and in the possession of which they should find, the heighest complacency and satisfaction ; yet were they not able by the *light of nature*, to determine clearly *what* it was ; but were only fain to proceed by faint guesses, till experience shewed them that they were in the wrong. Thus some blindly fixed it in *Riches* and in *Honour*, in the gawdy *Pageantry* and *varieties* of this World ; but soon found when possessed of them, that they were much more valuable in the *Chase* than in the *Quarry*, that they owed all their value barely to *opinion*, and left the Soul still as restless and uneasie as before : Others more wisely would have it to consist, in the *perfection* and *improvement* of the *Reason* and *Understanding* ; till they found, that all their *knowledge* could extend no farther, than to make them sensible of their greater *ignorance* :

ignorance: and a third sort, with a conjecture that came nearest to the Truth, placed it in that *manly pleasure* and *agreeable satisfaction*, which results from the *Conscience* of having *done well*; till they perceived, that the strength of those *moral excellencies*, was too weak to sustain them under a sharp affliction, or to arm them against the apprehensions of what was to come hereafter; and they were fain to leave the world with this complaint in their mouths, *Anxius Vixi, Dubius morior*, I lived in uncertainties, and I die doubting. Thus was *Human Wisdom* bewildered in the way, that leads to Man's true and greatest felicity; it indeed advised him to hasten towards it, but was unable to direct him what path to follow; and by missing his road at the first setting out, he gained nothing more by *all* his toil and trouble, but the being still farther from his journey's end. But what *this* wanted, *Religion* supplies; it shews us that the *highest perfection* of our *nature*, consists in our *resemblance* to *Almighty God*; and the utmost *happiness* of which we are capable, in the uninterrupted enjoyment of

of him: In order to which end, it effectually imprints in our minds, such an *awe* and *reverence* for that *Supreme Being*, as may powerfully perswade us to recommend our selves to his favour, and is the *Fountain* and *Original* of *Christian Piety*. And therefore I proceed.

3dly. To prove, that a due *knowledge* of *God* and of our duty towards him, is the *Basis* and *Groundwork* of true *Religion*.

Religion is that solemn obligation, by which we are tyed to the careful observance, of whatever God has revealed to be his Will; and therefore this obligation can never be complied with, unless we have a just notion of God himself, and of that Will of his which we are bound to observe. The first thing then that *Religion* requires, is that we inform our selves of the *Nature* and *Attributes* of *God*; and raise to our selves such a lofty *Idea* of his infinite excellencies, as may shed abroad in our hearts that *Reverential Fear* of him, which is called in my
Text

Text the beginning of *Wisdom*. For we must not understand by the *Fear of the Lord*, such a *servile dread* or *slavish apprehension*, as may make us afraid to appear in his sight, and may tempt us (with *Jonah*) to endeavour to flee from the presence of God; but such an awful sense of his Majesty, and of the Perfections of his Nature, as may work within us a respect and difference, suitable to the vast quality of so elevated a Being; such as may at once repress all undecencies, whether of thoughts or words or actions, and be consistent with Love and Peace, and Joy, and all those softer and more tender motions of the Soul: For such a knowledge of God as this, is that substantial and immoveable Foundation, upon which the whole Superstructure of Piety is erected, and our Obedience to his Will is universally grounded: It is a lively sense of his Infinite goodness, that makes us willing to comply with whatever he requires; it is a just acknowledgement of his unbounded Wisdom, that makes us give up our selves to his disposal; it is a firm assurance of his unalterable Truth, that makes us absolutely rely

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upon

upon his gracious promises; and it is a stedfast persuasion of his *Impartial Justice*, that makes us tremble at the breach of his Righteous Commandments: In a word, there is not any single branch throughout the *whole System* of our Duty, but what is influenced by *our knowledge* of the Divine Nature, and by the awful submission which *that* imprints upon us.

And now, if we take a short review of these three Conclusions, we shall find that they sufficiently make out, the truth of that Proposition which was to be demonstrated: For if true *Wisdom* be always employed, in directing us to the attainment of our chief happiness; if we cannot be conducted to this Happiness, but by the Ministry and guidance of true *Religion*; and if true *Religion* has for its first Principle, a due *knowledge of God* and of our Duty towards him; it then follows naturally and unavoidably, that *Speculative Piety*, or a due *knowledge of God* and of our Duty towards him, is the first *Foundation* of true *Wisdom*; and the
Psalms's

Psalmist's Aphorism is thus far verified,
That the fear of the Lord is the beginning
of wisdom.

But must we then stop at the first
enterance upon *Wisdom*, and make no
farther progress in saving knowledge?
Shall we barely take up with knowing
our Master's will, which will only en-
crease the weight of our Condemnati-
on; without busing our selves in the
doing of it also, which alone can quali-
fie us for a reward? No, we must
proceed from *Theory* to *Practice*; and
if we will set up for *Wisemen* indeed,
we must suffer our *Judgments* to have a
sway upon our *Actions*, and powerfull-
ly to influence our *Lives* and *Conversa-*
tions. And this leads me to the proof
of my.

2d. Proposition, namely, that *Prac-*
tical Piety, or the regulating of our
Actions according to this our knowledge
is the height and Perfection of under-
standing; A good understanding have all
they that do his commandments.

Wisdom (we see) is industriously conversant, about the promoting of our truest happiness; and whatever is not some way subservient to that end, is wholly undeserving of so venerable a name: But if our *knowledge* proceeds no farther, than barely to rectifie the errors of our *understanding*, and make that capable of passing a *true inward judgment*, without having any *outward sensible operation*, by correcting and amending the whole tenour of our *Actions*, it is so far from contributing to our *advantage* or *felicity*, that it only enhances our *guilt* and our *punishment*; by making every transgression into which we fall, become a *willful* provocation, and a sin against *knowledge*: And he who advances no farther than this, is so far from discharging the part of a *wise Man*, that he is liable to the imputation of the most gross *imprudence*. For can any thing impeach a Man of greater *folly*, than to have the sure means of making himself happy, and to be sensible of the power which he has of so doing; and yet stupidly to neglect such a favourable oppor-

opportunity, and thereby expose himself to the most miserable extremities? This is a procedure so weak and injudicious, that tho too many of us are guilty of it in relation to our *Souls*, we should blush to be found so, in respect of our *Podies* or our *Estates*: Would not he be rather an object of Contempt than Pity, who being tortured with the accute pains of the Strangury or the Gout, and being possessed of a remedy that would infallibly give him ease, and secure him against the returns of those racking distempers, should content himself with knowing that his disease was *curable*, without applying the *Medicine* which would administer relief? Would not he pass amongst us for a *Madman* or an *Idiot*, who having a certain prospect of making a *plentiful fortune*, should satisfy himself with the *possibility* of doing it, without taking that method which would infallibly accomplish it, and thereby expose himself to a perpetual *Beggary*? And shall we then think the *Folly* to be *less*, where the concern is of infinitely *greater* moment and importance? When we

have fully informed our selves of the means, by which we may secure to our selves *everlasting happiness*, shall we think it enough dully to sit still, and entertain our selves with the thoughts of what we might attain to, without ever setting about the necessary task; whilst our abused *knowledge* does only serve to plunge us the deeper into eternal destruction? For how justly shall God deal with such a Man, who is contented with knowing what he ought to do, (and thereby does but *aggravate his disobedience*) without ever taking care to act accordingly; when he shall give him a *prospect* of the joys of *Heaven*, and a view of those delights that are prepared for the Righteous (which will only serve to *imbitter* his loss of them) without ever allowing him to *partake* of those advantages? This is a mismanagement so notoriously *unreasonable*, that it is a recoiling back from the *beginning* of wisdom, to the *highest pitch* of folly and *indiscretion*; and they who thus scandalously transgress the rules of *Prudence*, may justly be addressed to in the *Psalmist's* language, *Take heed, ye unwise amongst the people,*

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The Seventh Sermon.

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O ye Fools, when will you understand?
But as this is a proceeding extremely blameable, and the effect of an ignorance that is wholly unaccountable; so the *exemplifying* of our *Piety* by a *Religious Conversation*, and the reducing of our *knowledge* into *Life* and *Action*, is the highest Expression of an *exalted Prudence*, and the instance of a *Wisdom* that has arrived at its *perfection*: For what can be a more lively proof, of a transcendant *Judgment*, and a consummate *Understanding*, than an exact conformity to those Rules and Prescriptions, which we are inwardly convinced have a natural tendency to promote and advance our true Felicity? Wherein can a *Wise Man* be more deservedly employed, than in copying out the excellency of his own *Ideas*, and bringing all his *Maximes* into *use* and *practice*? For this cause it was that the *Prudent Man* examined the vast moment of the divine injunctions, and digested them formerly in his Mind; not that they may lie there dead and insignificant, but might spring up in his *Actions* with a vigorous encrease,

For, indeed, what can be more agreeable to the dictates of true *Wisdom*, than to accustom our selves sometimes to such entertainments, as we hope to be employed in to all Eternity; and to busy our selves constantly in the exercise of such Duties, as will make us *easy here*, and *happy hereafter*? But *practical Piety* is that which is thus profitable unto all things, having promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come. Give me leave to examine it in relation to both circumstances, and to shew how eminently instrumental it is, both to our *temporal* and *eternal* Felicity; and consequently how justly it may deserve to be stiled the *perfection* of our *Understanding*.

1st. Then, To be habitually conversant in the exercises of *Piety*, is an instance of the truest and most considerate *Wisdom*, because it is the most effectual means to promote our happiness and well-being in this Life.

There

There are four things for the attainment of which we are chiefly solicitous in this World ; and if we can contrive to be possessed of them, we think our condition to be very satisfactory : and they are, a *clear Reputation*, a *comfortable Fortune*, a *healthful Body*, and a *quiet Mind* ; and these are no way so effectually secured, as by the constant practice of *Vertue* and *Religion*.

1st. As to a *clear and unblemished Reputation*. The *Religious Man* will never do any thing that may cast a just aspersiion upon *that* ; it is (as it were) his *outward Conscience*, by which he is rendered the same to Men, that he endeavours by his *inward one* to approve himself to *God* ; and therefore he takes all imaginable care to keep *that* spotless and undefiled : and *Vertue* is accompanied of its self with such a native loveliness and agreeableness, that even the most vicious and profligate Wretches, cannot but do justice to such a One, and give at least a silent approbation to him :

him: However *perverse or crooked a generation*, it may be the unhappiness of such a Man to *live in the midst of*, yet if he *shines as a light* amongst them, his credit will remain pure and untaunted; and will no more be sullied by such a Neighbourhood, than the Sun-beams are polluted by visiting a Dunghil: But amongst the few that understand and follow after Holiness, how well grounded a Reputation must such a Man establish! and though he should meet with the reproaches of the others, yet how little will he need to value the censures of the *wicked* and the *foolish*, whilst the *good* and the *wise* are all of his side! But,

2dly. As to a *convenient and comfortable Fortune*. That which establishes a Man's *Reputation*, is the most likely means to make his *Fortune* too; and *Piety* being the best instrument to secure the *one*, cannot be supposed defective in advancing the *other*. The *fame of probity* and of *dealing justly*, will fairly recommend him to *business* and *preferment*; a *serious application*

plication to the *duties* of his *Calling*, will *entitle* him to those *Advantages* which are the rewards of *Industry*; his *Temperance* and *Frugality* will hinder all *extravagances*, which may lessen his *Revenue* or impair his *Estate*; and a diffusive *Charity*, which is as well the most profitable as the most innocent *Usury*, will draw down the blessing of a considerable increase: Thus will *Religion* more truly advance in its common *Methods*, even our *wordly* interest, than all the little fetches of *cunning* and *design*, which only alarm Men to stand upon their Guard, and are never attended with the divine Blessing. But,

3dly. As to a *vigorous* and *healthful* Body. Those *intemperances* and *excesses*, which are the unhappy consequences of a *vitious* Conversation, are also the *fore-runners* of *weakness* and *infirmity*; but all these are restrained by the Rules of true *Piety*, which by teaching us the Lessons of *Continence* and *Abstinences*, does effectually arm us against most *Distempers*, which are generally occasioned by an irregular *living*: and where

where *temperance* cannot quite *secure* us, there *Patience* will at least *support* us; and the next happiness to not being liable to these inconveniences, is that of being able to go *through* them chearfully. But if we consult the *Sick Man's Catalogue*, we shall find that most of them owe their *infirmities*, to the want of that care which *Piety* prescribes, and to their not being led by the dictates of *Religion*; I appeal to the crazy Limbs and trembling Joints of some, and to the decayed Senses and nauseating Stomachs of others; whether *Piety* would not have been an excellent preservative, against those dismal extremities under which they labour? and therefore an exact compliance with the Maxims of *that*, is one approved method to keep the *Body* *healthful*. But,

4thly. As to a *serene* and *quiet Mind*. Nothing can possess us of this Advantage, but a firm adherence to the Duties of our Profession; and yet this is a Blessing so eminently valuable, that *it* is to the *Soul*, what
Health

Health is to the *Body*, the Salt and seasoning of all other satisfactions, without which they lose their relish and become insipid : Let our Reputation be never so great, let our *Fortune* be never so considerable, let our Bodily *Health* be never so constant, yet if our *Mind* be ill at ease, all these other delights will be tasteless and unpalatable : For there is a certain busie and active thing within us, called *Conscience*, which Humane Nature, tho' unimproved by Grace, can never totally get quit of ; *this* in the midst of all our jollity, will intrude into our Company like an unwelcome Guest, and sour the Conversation of a *wanton Mistress*, or a *drunken Friend* ; it will pall our enjoyments when the Appetite is most eager, and dash our *sweetest Draughts* of *Pleasure* with *Gall* and *Wormwood*. For however, those outward benefits may deceive *others*, and make us in their Opinion to pass for happy ; yet can they never carry the fallacy so far, as to put a Cheat upon *our selves* ; but amongst all our Gallantry and gawdy Splendour, we shall feel the
lashes

lashes of *that inward Tormentor*. A good *Conscience* alone can make a *quiet Mind*, and this is only gained by a *Religious Conversation*: He that has a modest Sense of his own sincerity, that has lived *void of offence towards God and Man*, that has zealously endeavoured to discharge his Duty, in every branch and particular of it; he and he alone is fully possessed, of that agreeable *Peace and Tranquility of Mind*, which begins his *early Heaven on this side the Grave*, and gives him a *tast* of that joy which *shall be one Day revealed*. And this brings me to consider.

2dly. That the constant exercise of Religious Duties, is an instance of the truest and most considerate *Wisdom*, because it is the most effectual means to promote our eternal Happiness in the World to come.

Though the Duties of Religion cannot be entered upon, without our first knowing what our Duty is; though *practical Piety* cannot be well discharged, unless we have formerly been

been acquainted with *speculative Religion*; yet this without the other will avail us nothing, *like Faith without works*, it will be dead and unprofitable. For the former was only necessary to be known, in order to fit us for the performance of the latter; and God has not promised eternal happiness to the *hearers* and *understanders* of his Will, but to the *doers* and *practitioners* of it. Whereas, he whose just *Actions* are regulated by true Knowledge, who lives according to that Rule and Standard, has all the assurance that the God of Truth can give, of receiving such a recompence as his diligence deserves: Thus we are informed by the Mouth of his Apostle, *That to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, he will render eternal Life; that if any Man abound always in the work of the Lord, his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord; and the Psalmist assures us, in the Words immediately following my Text, that if any Man do his Commandments, the praise of him shall endure for ever.* And what can more

more fire any generous Spirit, than the prospect of such a *praise* as is here meant? not a *transient commendation*, or *momentary applause*, but such a *praise as endures for ever*! How will that Man be then surprised with ineffable raptures both of joy and astonishment, when he shall be received into the Mansions of Eternity, with the numerous Acclamations of the blessed Spirits! when ten thousand times ten thousands of Saints and Angels, shall congratulate his Arrival and applaud his constancy! and when God shall add to it his own Confirmation, with a *well done good and faithful Servant*, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. For this *praise* of God is not barren and unfruitful, it is not like the *faint approbation* of *Worldlings*, which dies with the breath that forms it, and vanishes into the Air of which it is composed; God never *praises* but whom he *approves*, and whom he *approves* he infallibly *rewards*. How richly then will they find themselves overpaid, for all those trivial hardships and uneasinesses, which discourage us from proceeding

proceeding in our Christian course; nay how highly will their greatest sufferings be over-rated, and the utmost difficulties of their warfare! When they find themselves swallowed up in an *abyss of delight*; and happily possessed of such *felicity*, as is *infinite in degree* as well as in *continuance*! Then will they be abundantly convinced, by an experiment the surest and most comfortable of any; That *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of true Wisdom*; and that *the doing his Commandments is the height of Understanding*.

I shall only add a word or two of application upon the two general Heads of my Discourse, and so I shall conclude. And,

1st. Is *speculative Piety*, or a due *Knowledge of God*, and of our Duty towards him; the first *foundation of true Wisdom*? How grossly then are those Men mistaken, who set up for the great *Masters of Prudence and Reason*, by denying the very *existence of that God*, the *fear of whom is the first Introduction to Knowledge*! who endeavour

deavour to revenge upon the *whole* word of God, the reproach which is fixed upon them in *this* and other *Texts* of it, by accusing *that* of folly and *inconsistence*, which is the *Power* of God, and the *Wisdom* of God ! But notwithstanding the opinion of their own sufficiency, and the undeserved applauses of their deluded Profelytes, all their boasted *Wisdom* is but *foolishness* with God ; they *forfeit* their reason, whilst they thus endeavour to *exalt* it ; and level themselves with a lower rank of Creatures : for as the *Psalmist* in *one* place pronounces him a *Fool*, who has said in his heart that *there is no God* ; so he tells us in another, that *this Fool*, *this Man without Understanding*, may be compared unto the *Beasts that perish* : No better a Character than that of *Fool* and *Beast*, can the word of *Truth* give to this *pretender* to *Wisdom*. I would to God, that they who are so *nice* and *tender* of their *Honour* upon the slightest occasions, would resolve in *this case* to vindicate their *Reputation*, and to wipe off an *aspersion* they so scandalously lie under, by acquainting themselves with

with the Nature of God, and of that Duty which they owe him ; by carefully implanting within their Hearts, that *fear of the Lord which is the beginning of Wisdom*. But,

2dly. Is *Practical Piety*, or the regulating of our *Actions* according to this *Knowledge*, the height and perfection of *Understanding* ? How miserably then are those Men deceived, who flatter themselves that they are safe enough, because they have a *superficial knowledge* of their Duty, without ever taking care to *practice* what they know ! Who can indeed *confess* a *Saviour*, and cry out (with the two possessed with Devils) *Jesus thou Son of God* ; but preface that acknowledgment of his Divinity as they did, with a *What have we to do with thee* ? But these are *empty Pretenders* to *Religion* ; that is defined a *Practical Science* ; whose design is not barely to *inform* our Judgments, but to have a due *influence* upon our *Lives* and *Actions* : for most certain it is, that they, whose *Holy Profession* is contradicted by their *vitious Conversation* ;

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who are *speculative Christians*, and *practical Atheists*; shall receive no other Advantage; by *knowing their Masters Will*, since they did not do it, but the sad priviledge of *being beaten with many stripes*. But can we absolve him from the most stupid *inconsiderateness*, who perishes with the means of safety in his hands? Such is the condition of that Man, who *understands his Duty*, but will not *practise it*: he is possessed of what may make him infinitely happy, and yet foolishly neglects to make use of it as he ought. A *Wise Man* will act in a much different manner; he will make *one advantage a step to a greater*; will gradually ascend from *Knowledge to Practise*; and thus go on from *Strength to Strength*, till unto the God of Gods he appears in Sion. Let us, if we design to deserve that Character, or to share in those Advantages which such a Man enjoys, proceed by his Rules of *Prudence and Discretion*: and having first duly exercised our *Knowledge*, in that *fear of the Lord which is the beginning of Wisdom*; let us afterwards shew that

that we have attained to a good *Understanding*, by constantly doing his *Commandments*. I shall close up all with the *Wise Mans Verdict*, which is pronounced expressly in favour of this Doctrine: *My Son, fear God, for that is Wisdom; and to depart from Evil is Understanding.* Which that we may all do, and be both Wise and Happy in so doing, he of his infinite mercy grant, through the Merits and Mediation of our Blessed Saviour. To whom with the Father and the holy Spirit, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

Overcome America
by your Dominion, Power, Might,
and Honorable Honor, might
the Father and the Holy Spirit,
for our blessed Saviour, to whom
through the merits and blood
of his infinite mercy
and he best, Willard Tappan in
which that we may all

Job the 8th. Chap. and
the latter part of the
13th. Verse.

*The Hypocrites hope shall
perish :*

P *Rofaneness* and *Hypocrisie* are the
two spreading Vices, under
which all the whole Catalogue
of Sinners may be comprehend-
ed; the *former* of these consists in an open
and bare-faced avowing of our Trans-
gressions ; the *latter* in a careful con-
cealing them from the Eyes of the
World : the *one* is like the declared
Malice and Enmity of the *Jews*, who
cryed aloud against our Blessed Saviour,
Crucifie him, Crucifie him ; the *other* re-
sembles

The Eighth Sermon.

seembles the mean Treachery of *Judas*, who said *Hail Master*, and betrayed him: and tho' indeed the *prophane* Person may seem to be the worst Commonwealths-man, and more pernicious than the other to *civil Society*; yet certainly the *Hypocrite* is the worst of *Christians*; no Vice of the blackest dye, being so sharply and so frequently declaimed against by our Saviour, as this of *pretended Sanctity*: as being a Sin, the most likely to spread and flourish, because it carries with it a shew of *seeming Godliness*, to recommend it; and can hardly be distinguished from *that* which is *really* such, but by the great Discerner of all Hearts.

But however these Men may flatter themselves in the Applause of mistaken Mankind, yet we are assured that they are abundantly guilty in the sight of God, that *verily* they have already received their Reward, that all their Expectations of future recompence shall miserably deceive them, that the *Hypocrites* hope shall perish. In my following Discourse upon these Words, I shall,

First,

First, explain to you, the Genuine and natural meaning of this Word, *Hypocrite*, and give you an impartial and true Character of such a Person.

Secondly, I shall shew you, what manner of *Hope* such a Person may possibly entertain.

Thirdly, I shall prove, that all his *Hopes* are ill grounded, that the *Hypocrites hope shall perish*.

First, Then I shall explain to you the Genuine and natural meaning of this Word *Hypocrite*, and give you a true and impartial Character of such a Person.

The Word *ὑποκριτής* or *Hypocrite*, is an Expression borrowed from the *Theater*, and means no more in its large and properest Signification, than a *Stage-Player* or *Actor*, such a one, who under a borrowed Dress and artificial Disguise, represents a Person which he really is not. But in
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a more restrained and scriptural Acceptation, it is alwayes used to express *such* a Man only, as acts the part of a *godly* Man, without *being such*; who covers and conceals his *inward Filthiness*, under an *outward* appearance of *Purity* and *Perfection*. From this brief Explanation of the *Word*, we may easily gather a true notion of that kind of *Person* which it is used to signifie. A *Hypocrite* therefore, is one, whose *Devotion* is meerly *outside*; who has Religion always in his *Mouth*, but never in his *Heart*; who, like *Æsop's Dog*, lets go the *Substance*, to catch at the *Shadow*; endeavouring to *seem good*, rather than to *be so*; who studiously asserts a *form of Godliness*, but willfully neglects the *Power of it*. If he gives *Almes*, it is (as our Saviour describes it) *with a Trumpet sounding before him*, that he may have *Glory of Men*; if he *prays*, it is *standing in the Corners of the Streets*, that he may be *seen of Men*; if he *fasts*, it is *with a disfigured Countenance*, that he may appear *unto Men to fast*: All his good Actions have no other principle but *Pride*, and

no other end but wordly Applause. His Devotions are generally longer than those of the best Men, but withal more loud; his Mortifications are commonly stricter, but withal more publick; and he oftentimes takes more pains to be damned, than a good Christian does to work out his Salvation: So unaccountably foolish are his Proceedings, that he looses the Enjoyment of this World, without having any prospect of a Recompence in the other. He indeed lets his Light shine before Men, that they may see his good Works; but he stops there, and never designs that they should thereby glorifie his Father which is in Heaven: 'Tis true, he never hides his Candle under a bushel; but by putting it into a Candlestick he only aims to shew himself, and not to give light to the whole House. Thus do all those Actions, which would be good in another, loose their value in him, because they are not well intended: and his best Performances are but so many bitter Streams, because they proceed from a corrupted Fountain. But as all his good Actions are abominations

minations in the sight of God; so his *ill* ones are heightened by the most *aggravating* circumstances. His *private* Sins are committed with a greater Gust and Appetite, because he is fain to deny himself the Enjoyment of them in *publick*; and the uneasiness of dissembling, makes him throw off the mask when he dares, with double eagerness and delight. With *larger draughts of Intemperance* he makes himself then amends for his *pretended Austerity*; and every taste of pleasure receives a new relish, from his Consideration of cheating the whole World: Thus every transgression of his becomes a *presumptuous* one; and each particular Sin is aggravated and enhanced, by the additional guilt of *lying* and *deceiving*. If ever *God comes into his Thoughts*, his notions of him are mean and contemptible, and therefore *he has no fear of him before his Eyes*: how low must his Conceptions be of his *Justice* and his *Power*, who dares with such a continued Dissimulation, to provoke the *one*, and affront the *other*? how slender an opinion must he have of the eternal

Wisdom,

Wisdom, who thinks himself able to impose upon it? and how poorly must he conceive of the divine *Goodness*, who imagines it may be wrought upon to patronize a *cheat*? Yet these must be the *Hypocrites* Conceptions in relation to the *Deity*; and whatever notions of him he entertains, can have no other foundation than such sordid apprehensions. Thus have I endeavoured to pull of the *Vizard* of the *Hypocrite*, and to display him in his true and natural colours; at least so far as 'tis possible to give his Character, whose very nature it is to deceive all those that would sound him, and to appear what really he is not.

I proceed, Secondly to shew what manner of *hope* such a sort of person as I have already described may possibly entertain.

Since we are positively told, that the *Hypocrites hope shall perish*; we must therefore not expect to find that it is well grounded: for most certain it is, that that *Hope* shall never fail which has a good foundation: we must therefore only endeavour to enquire, what means

means and methods the *Hypocrite* can find out; to cheat himself into a kind of *Hope*, and to flatter himself into some sort of pleasing *Expectation*.

First then; we have known some customary and habitual Lyars, who by often repeating the same *untruth*, have at last brought themselves to believe it to be *true*; now such as these are, is the *Hypocrite*; his every action is a *Lye*, and yet the frequent repetition of it may at long run persuade him that it is *real*; and by daily *personating* the religious Man, he may in process of time be induced to believe, that he is *really* what he *seems* to be; and as most mens *opinions* are prejudiced by their *practices*, he may raise to himself a notion, that all *Religion* is *superficial*, that nothing more is required of us, than an *outward shew* of devotion; that when the Apostle commands us to *abstain from all appearance* of evil, he only means that we should not be *seen* to Sin, tho' we indulge our selves in *private*. However odd and surprizing a Character of this nature may seem

seem, yet we may remember, that the *Pharisees*, so often mentioned and upbraided in the Gospel, were of this very leaven; they thought that it was enough to *clean the outside of the Cup and the Platter* (as our Saviour figuratively expresses it) *but within to be full of Extortion and Excess*: They paid *Tithe* indeed of *Mint, Annise, and Commin*; but omitted the weightier matters of the Law, *Judgement, Mercy, and Faith*: They said long Prayers, it is true, but at the same time they devoured *Widows houses*: yet this *Carkass* of Religion without a *Soul* they valued themselves highly upon; they thought themselves the only perfect Men; and despised all others, as only fit to herd with *Publicans and Sinners*. The *Christian Hypocrite* therefore as well as the *Jewish* one, may be so far biaßed in his own Favour, as to conclude that an outward *Pageantry* of Devotion is all that is required of him, and consequently that he may *hope* with reason.

But, *Secondly*, he may perhaps suppose, that the good *Example* which he sets to others, by the outward Exercise

ercise of religious duties, and the advantages which probably redound to them thereby, may give him a title to a future Reward: and indeed the Sight of so much Austerity and Mortification as he professes, may happen to work some such good effect; and as God can when he pleases, raise good out of evil; so the very *Hypocrisie* of some may be the occasion of a *true* and *sincere Piety* in others. For Men not being able to pry into the secrets of the Heart, can give no other Judgment of their fellow Creatures, than such a one as is regulated by their *outward Actions*; and therefore a well-dissembled *Devotion*, may possibly produce Effects answerable to those of a *true one*. Then will he be apt to apply to himself, some such comfortable Sayings, as that of the Prophet Daniel, *that they which turn many to Righteousness, shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever*; and will perhaps think himself so far concerned in that Character, as from thence to conclude, that he has a *Hope* well grounded.

But,

But, 3dly, the *Hypocrites* Notion of God must needs be so mean, (as I have already hinted,) that he imagines he can as well deceive his Eyes, as those of his fellow *Creatures*; (for unless he imagines so, it is impossible he should dare to act as he does) he flatters himself, with the wicked Man in the *Psalmist*, that God has forgotten, he hides away his Face, and will never see it; or carries his Impiety yet farther, and questions whether there is any Knowledge in the most High. He either believes that God takes no notice at all of what he does; or that it is such a slight and superficial View, as pierces no farther than the outside; that the same deceit, which makes him pass for a Saint among Men, will impose upon God too; and that consequently he may expect to pass with him also for what he seems, and may hope for a reward proportionable to that Appearance. Thus does he in vain cry *Peace, Peace, to his own Soul, where no Peace is*; for whatever his Hope may be, it is but the Hope of a *Hypocrite*, and we are assured, that that shall perish.

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But,

Which leads me to the Consideration of my third Proposition, namely, to prove that the *Hopes* of such a Man are *ill grounded*; that the *Hypocrites Hopes* shall perish.

To make out this Proposition more clearly and undeniably, it will be necessary to look back upon and examine, the *pretended Grounds* of the *Hypocrites Hope*, which we have already laid down; and to shew how shallow and unreasonable they are.

The first of these to be considered, is his perswading himself that a *superficial Devotion*, and an *outward Exercise of Religion*, is all that is required at a *Christians* Hand, without the necessary Concurrence of *inward Purity*. But alas upon how weak and sandy a *Foundation* does he build, whose *Hopes* and *Expectations* have no surer a *Basis*! Human Laws and Obligations may influence and command the *outward Actions*, but it is the sole and incommunicable *Prerogative* of the *Deity*, to assert a
Juris-

Jurisdiction over the *Thoughts* and the *Affections*.

This was the very Reason and Occasion of our Saviour's coming into the World; to purge away that corrupt opinion, which began then to take such sure footing; namely, that a Conformity to *outward* and *ceremonial* Ordinances, was the *whole Business* of a *religious Life*: Such was the reputed *Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*, and yet we are assured, that if our *Righteousness does not exceed theirs*, we shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. By our great Law-giver the guilt of Murther, is annexed to being angry; the guilt of Adultery is affixed to lustful Desires; in short, every Offence which under the *Jewish Ceremony*, was only penal in the *Commission*, is under the *Christian Dispensation*, punishable in the *intention*; and what then becomes of the *Hypocrites Hope* in this case? when God requires a contrite Heart, will he be put of (think you) with wringing of Hands, and with wry Faces? when he expects an *humble Spirit*, will he be satisfied with a dejected Countenance?

when he demands the *Sobriety* of the *Mind*, will he be flammed with the *demureness* of the *Look*? in a word, when he enjoyns us to give him our *Hearts*, will he be contented to take up with the *Husk*, instead of the *Kernell*, a *bended Knee*, for a *submissive Soul*? a ceremonious *Respect*, instead of a *reasonable Service*? though *Man* may be so cheated, *God will not thus be mocked*; and if it has no better a *Foundation* than this, the *Hypocrites hope* most certainly *shall perish*.

But 2dly, let us consider the next *ground* alledged for the *Hypocrites hope*; and that is, the good which may result to others from his *seeming Piety*, by inviting them to that which is *real* and *substantial*. But this also is a tottering *Foundation*, and has nothing firm or solid to depend upon. For does the *Hypocrite* design any such thing, by his external and empty *Performances*, as the good of his *Brother's Soul*, or the *Advancement* of *God's glory* in the promotion of *Piety*? no certainly; for if he had any such designs he were no *Hypocrite*, his *Piety* would be

more

more than a *bare Appearance*: But since his intentions are not at all directed to such an end, since he aims at nothing but his own Credit in this World; he has no more reason to expect a reward, for the *accidental Good* that may arise from his *Hypocrisie*; than Judas has, to challenge everlasting Happiness as the *Recompence* of his *Treachery*, because the *Salvation* of Mankind was *perfected* thereby. This, if allowed, would be an Excuse for *all manner* of Impiety; and the very *persecutors* of the Church of God might then plead in their own Defence, that they, by their Severity, had made the number of Christian Professors to encrease and multiply. But this sort of Sophistry will not avail us before God; 'tis not enough, that the *consequence* of our Actions has been good, but it is required also that the *Means* and the Intent should be so too; and if any one of these Links be broken, the *whole chain drops asunder*; the admirable Contexture of Godliness being such that he who makes a flaw in *one part*, unravells the *whole*: Any *one* failing is sufficient to denominate an Action *bad*; but there must be a Combination of *all*

things requisite, to make it justly deserve the name of *good*. We are positively commanded *not do to evil, that good may come of it*, and certainly, it is more unwarrantable, to do it without that design; if it pleases God to raise a *happy Effect*, from so *pernicious a cause*; his is the Honour and the Glory, and neither reward nor thanks belongs to us. If therefore it has no surer a Foundation than *this, the Hypocrites hope shall perish*.

But 3^{dly}, Let us consider the third and last Ground assigned for the *Hypocrites hope*, and see, whether that has any thing in it more solid and substantial; and that is, the mean notions which he entertains of God; whereby he hopes to *impose upon, and deceive him*, as well as he has *deluded others*. But, how very miserable and hopeless is his Estate, who has no other Expectation of Happiness, than what is founded upon so false and so absurd an Opinion? *shall he that made the Ear not hear?* why let him say the *Hypocrite*, I pray as often and as loud as any one: *shall he that made the Eye not see?* why let him

him sayes he still; my *outward* Resemblance and Behaviour is as reverent and devout as any ones: but let us go a litle farther; *he that teacheth Man knowledge shall he not know? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of Man*: this cutts off the Confidence of the *Hypocrite*; for what can he know in his thoughts, but Pride and self-conceitedness, Vanity and worldly Mindedness, a Fear of Man and a Contempt of God? What shall become of the *Hypocrites hope*, when the *Wisdom* of God, which he thought to *over-reach*, shall exert it self in his *Confusion*? when the *Justice* of God, which he thought to *elude*, shall *exalt* it self in his *Condemnation*? when the *Power* of God, which he proudly *undervalued*, shall *magnifie* it self in his *Destruction*? when all the *Attributes* of God shall be turned against him, to vindicate themselves from those mean Conceptions which he had entertained of them? how shall he be covered with Horrour and with Shame; when that God whom he thought to have deceived as well as he did others, shall discover his Cheat before *Heaven* and *Earth*, before *Angels* and *Men*, and

shew the *rottenness* and *uncleaness* which lay hid within *that painted Sepulchre*? when he shall find the severest of all Sentences denounced against such as him; and that the vilest of Sinners can undergo no worse a Condemnation, than that of *having their Portion amongst Hypocrites*. If therefore, it is founded upon an Opinion of God's *Imperfections*, who is infinitely *perfect*, it has no sure bottom to subsist upon, and *the Hypocrites hope shall perish*.

Thus have I, as briefly as possibly I could, laid before you the Character of a *Hypocrite*, the seeming reasons upon which his *hopes* are founded, the *Weakness* and *Insufficiency* of those reasons, and consequently the *unaccountableness* of his *hopes* also: and I have the rather endeavoured to be very *short* in *this*, that I may be somewhat the *longer* in my *Application*; for whatever we may fondly conceit of our selves, this is a matter that very much concerns us all. It is true, indeed, a *Hypocrite*, when thus displayed according to his genuine and natural Deformity, is such an object of loathing and disgust, that

I beleive most who now hear me, will be apt to cry out with the Pharisee God, *I thank thee, that I am not such a one as this*; but if we seriously examine our own Souls, and nicely pry into the secrets of our Consciences; I fear there will be very few found amongst all here present, to whom I may not, at least in some particulars, address my self, as *Nathan* did to *David*, *Thou art the Man*. And yet we find the Condition of such Men to be so very miserable, that it extreamly concerns every one of us to enquire, whether we are, or are not such. For let me, I beseech you, ask you some few Questions, and let your own Souls silently give an Answer.

Is all that *Noise* and *Talk* about *Religion*, which has lately been the usual Entertainment of our common Conversation, *real* and *heartty*? has that *truly* and *indeed* been the only *Principles* of our actings? *have* we not often given *that* the *Name*, when worldly *interest* has been the *thing*? do all our Professions of Conformity to the true Church proceed from our *Hearts*? and are we not rather of such or such a *Faction*,
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on, than of such or such a *religious Perswasion*? is our frequenting the publick Assemblies of the faithful, grounded upon an *Obedience* to the *Ordinances* of God; and not rather upon *Customs*, or the not knowing otherwise how to employ our time? Would we not rather, were it not for the Censure of Men, trifle away a Sunday, than attend upon the worship of God? and would we not, if we had the same *Convenience* of trafficking and selling, leave the Church of God as unfrequented that Day, as we do at the *ordinary times* of *divine Service*? Let us judge our selves my Brethren, that we be not judged of the Lord; and consider, that if the Case be thus with us, we are but *Hypocrites*, our hope shall perish.

But let us examine farther; are we as careful to preserve an *inward Purity*, as an *outward Appearance* of it? Are we as industrious to regulate our *Thoughts*, as our *Actions*? are we more fearful to offend God, than of giving *Scandal* to our *Neighbour*? are our *private Devotions* as fervent as our *publick*? are our prayers *zealous*, and yet not *noisy*? is
our

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our charity *large*, and yet not vain *glorious*? are our mortifications *strict*, and yet not performed for the *praise of Men*? do we *visit the fatherless and widows in their Affliction*, as well as give alms openly in the *Streets*? do we keep our selves unspotted *from the World*, as well as make the *World believe* we do so? if so, then is our *Religion pure and undefiled before God and the Father*; then are we *indeed*, what the *Hypocrite* but *seems to be*; and our *Hopes* shall *abide and flourish*, when his shall *wither and fall away*. But whether our Souls can answer us, in these and the like particulars, with *Comfort* or with *Confusion*, whether they *condemn* us or *acquit* us; we cannot make use of a better & more proper Method, either to *wean* us from our *Hypocrisie*, or to *confirm and strengthen* us in our *Sincerity*, than to endeavour,

1st. To have a *due Notion of God*.

2^{dly}. To have a *due Notion of Religion*.

First then, in order to either of the forementioned *Ends*, let us endeavour to have a *due Notion of God*; and that in relation to *all his Attributes*. And

1st. As

1st. As to his *Mercy*. Let us consider, that this tho' *infinite*, yet is not *unreasonable* or *extravagant*; that it is not such a *foolish tenderness*, as is usually found amongst those whom we stile *good-natured Men*; which implies an *Easyness* to be wrought upon, without *sufficient Grounds* and *Reasons* for it: no, the *Infinity* of his *Goodness* does not consist, in bestowing rewards upon such as have no *manner* of pretentions to them but in *proportioning* such *vast Recompences*, to our *weak Performances*; and in a readiness to accept our *heartly Endeavours*, when they cannot reach so far as we desire; since God can never be inconsistent with himself, neither will his *Attributes* shock one another; there must be something done on our side to entitle us to his *Mercies*; and they will never be extended to us, but when they may be so, without contradicting his *Justice* or *Truth*. This Consideration therefore, will strongly enforce a *Sincerity* in our Proceedings; for the *Royal Psalmist* assures us, *That God will do good to those that are good, and to them that are upright in their Hearts.*

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But, 2^{dly}. As to his Truth ; Let us consider that *God is not a Man, that he should lie ; neither the Son of Man that he should repent : has he said, and shall he not do it ? or has he spoken, and shall he not make it good ?* Now he advises us, above all keepings to keep the Heart, because out of that are the Issues of life ; he bids us to give him that, *my Son give me thy Heart ;* he assures us, that a Hypocrite shall not come before him ; that the Congregation of Hypocrites shall be desolate ; that their Joy is but for a moment ; and that the Hypocrites in Heart heap up wrath. This Consideration therefore of the eternal Truth of God, and that tho' Heaven and Earth pass away, yet his Word shall not pass away ; is a strong preservative against Hypocrisie ; which we see branded by him who cannot lye, with so black a Character, and menaced with such dreadful Consequences.

But 3^{dly}, as to the divine Justice ; Let us consider, that the Judge of all the Earth will certainly do right ; that Vengeance is his, and he will repay ; that he will exact a total Obedience, to his most just and
righteous

righteous Injunctions; that when he commands us to *love him with all our Hearts, and all our Souls, and all our Minds*, he will not be put off with a bended *Knee* or a dejected *Countenance*, that he will certainly proceed in judging us, according to our Obedience to those rules and ordinances which he has set before us; that therefore *the pure in Heart only shall see God*, and that the *Hypocrites portion shall be appointed with the unfaithful Servant, and amongst unbelievers*. This Consideration of the impartial Justice of God, will be a great motive to Sincerity; since the Prophet assures us that *God in relation to his own beloved People, would have no Joy in their young Men, nor any Mercy upon their fatherless and widows, because every one of them was an Hypocrite*. But,

4thly and lastly, as to the *Wisdom* of God. Let us consider, that it is not so frail and unstable, as to be imposed upon by outward Appearances; that it pierces into the very *Heart and Reins*; it tries and examines them, and searches the innermost *Recesses of the Soul*; that the
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Thoughts of all Hearts are manifest to him; and his Eyes are over all our Ways; that he can see through the most cunning Disguises; that we are as present to him in our Closets, as in our Churches, that he discerns between the Act and the Intention; can see the Pride, that lies lurking under a counterfeit Humility; the intemperate Wishes, that are concealed under a seeming Austerity; he vain-glorious Affectation of Applause, that is covered over with a Shew of Piety and Devotion; he can separate things from Appearances; and can make as true a Judgment of them now, as in that great and terrible Day of the Lord, when the Secrets of all Hearts shall be revealed. And what Confusion of Face must cover the Hypocrite in that Day! when the unbounded Wisdom of God shall reveal all his Impostures! when the holy Vizard shall be quite plucked off, his Bosom turned outward, and all his secret Pollutions exposed to View! This Consideration of God's infinite Wisdom, which must certainly one day discover the Cheat, will perswade any rational Man not to practice it; and is a strong and
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most convincing Argument against *Hypocrisie*. We see therefore, how *this* is one of the best Methods to secure us against the danger of this Sin, to have a right notion of the *Attributes* of God, all which do jointly declare, *that the Hypocrites hope shall perish*.

2^{dly}, Another method to secure us against this danger, is to endeavour to have a *right Notion of Religion*.

The *Hypocrite* (we have seen) places *his Religion*, in the *outward Appearances* of *Piety* and *Devotion*; but since his *Hopes* raised upon this *Foundation*, *shall perish*; therefore *ours*, if we expect that they shall *stand*, must find out some better *Ground-work*. The *Jews* indeed might easily be mistaken in this particular, since their *Religion* consisted very much in *ceremonial Rites*, which the *Apostle* stiles *beggerly Elements*; the *temporal* advantages and inconveniences, laid down in the *Mosaical Law*, as the *Reward* of such as did well, and the *Punishment* of evil doers; seemed indeed to make their *Addreses* wholly to the *outward Man*; and it is therefore no great

great wonder, if they were biaſſed by the Conſideration of them, to ſuit their Devotions to their Rewards, and their Punishments, and conſequently to take up with an *outside of Religion* : But ſince our Saviour came purpoſely into the World, to aboliſh this ſort of *pageant Worſhip*; ſince the Goſpel in its Precepts, in its Promiſes, and Threatnings, Addreſſes to the *Soul* and *Spirit* rather than to the *Body*; a *Chriſtian* that falls into the ſame Errour, is wholly inexcusable. *Faith* is the great *Baſis* of our *Profeſſion*, and this (we know) proceeds not from the *Tongue*, but from the *Heart*; for though *with the mouth Confeſſion is made unto Salvation*, yet *with the Heart it is that Man believeth unto Righteouſneſs*. All the Commands of *Chriſt* are chiefly levelled at the *Thoughts* and the *Affections*; *actual Sins* are indeed forbidden, but ſo are *evil Imaginations* too: it is not enough, that we do not knock our *Neighbour* on the head, we muſt not ſo much as *wiſh him ill*, if we deſign to avoid the imputation of a *Murderer*: it is not ſufficient, that we do not *deſile our Neighbours bed*; if we have

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but

but wanton *Desires* towards the *Wife of his Bosom*, we lye under the censure of committing *Adultery*; it will not avail us, that we do not wrongfully *accuse* our Neighbour; if we are not heartily *concerned* for the *vindicating* his *Reputation*, we incur the blame of a *false Witness*. Thus has the *Christian Religion*, sublimated and exalted to a higher degree of perfection, all the *Injunctions* of the *Mosaical Law*; and placed upon us an obligation of *Obedience* beyond the *bare Actions*, even to the influencing the very *Thoughts* and *Faculties* of the *Soul*.

God forbid, that we should think, we are forbidden to do *good Works*; no, the *Commands* for them are too frequent and positive, to admit of such a *Cavil*; nor must we, to avoid *Hypocrisie*, run into *Profaneness* and *Sensuality*; these *things* (says our Saviour to the *Pharisees*) *ye ought to have done, and not to have left the others undone*; we must superadd our *good Intentions* to our *good Actions*; the *purifying* the *Soul* to the *washing* of the *Body*; *Mercy* to *Sacrifice*. There are some, I fear, who are *but too much* mistaken

taken in this particular; who think an *outward Conformity* to the Worship of the *true Church*, the very name of a *Christian* and a *Protestant*, is sufficient to entitle them to a place *on the right hand*; and forget *that they are obliged to work out their own Salvation with fear and trembling*; not only with trembling which relates to the *outward Actions*, but with fear also, which plainly points at an *inward Reverence*. These sort of Men think the hearing of *two Sermons* on a Sunday, to be a piece of extraordinary Devotion, and if they can arrive at *three* the merit is excessive; without endeavouring the mean while to practice one of them: They think their being present at the *publick Devotions* on the *Lord's Day*; may atone for the neglect of *private Prayers* during the *whole Week* after: But this is a Spice of *Hypocrisie* grounded (as you see) upon a *wrong Notion* of Religion; and therefore a *true Notion* of it, is a most excellent method to preserve us against this Sin; since we cannot but be convinced by the dictates of *that*, that *the Hypocrites hope shall perish*. Let us therefore in the name of God, who have looked into the danger of these Proceed-

ings; resolve accordingly against a Sin, which we find attended with such pernicious Consequences: *Let us hold fast the Faith with all Sincerity, not using our liberty as a Cloak of Maliciousness, and making a Shew of Godliness, a blind for our Commission of Filthiness and Uncleaness. Thus shall we have a title to the sight of God, which is promised to those that are pure in Heart; thus shall we avoid the dreadful Condemnation, of having our Portion appointed amongst Hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.*

From which most dismal and deplorable Condition, God grant that the *Sincerity* of our Hearts may deliver us all, through the Merits and Mediation of our Blessed Saviour, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, &c.

St. *Matt.* the 16th. Chap.
and the former part of
the 24th. Verse.

*Then said Jesus unto his
Disciples, if any Man
will come after me, let
him deny himself.*

IN the midst of one of the *noblest*
and *most flourishing Courts* of *Eu-*
rope, where our *Appetites* are sol-
lited and our *Senses* addressed to,
by the *Riches*, and the *Honours* and the
Pleasures of this World; the great Duty of
Selfdenial must inevitably be looked up-
on, as a very *difficult* part of our devout
Performances; and yet upon the Ac-
count of these dangerous Circumstances,
it cannot but appear extreamly *necessary*,

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and

and its Practice most *useful* and *advantageous* : Nothing indeed is more *contradictory* to *Flesh* and *Blood*, nothing more grating to the *natural* Man ; but then it is highly *pleasing* and *acceptable* to God, it is of great *Consideration* and *Value* in *his* Eyes. For could any one be found of so happy a Constitution, as to be conversant in all the Exercises of Piety, without putting upon himself any manner of Constraint ; an Obedience so *easy* and that stands him in so *little*, would have nothing considerable to recommend it : but to row against the Tide of one's Inclinations, to stem the rapid Current of one's Appetites and Affections ; to struggle against the violent Motions of our Will, and to wrestle with the Opposition of our contending Faculties ; this is an Employment that is *laborious* and *uneasy*, this is a Performance that we pay *dearly* for ; and the Reward of such a *Warfare* will certainly be proportionable, to the *Hardships* and *Difficulties* with which we have encountered. Such then is the Frame and Disposition of Mind, which is the necessary Qualification of a worthy
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Professor ; he must *refrain his Soul and keep it low, even as a Child that is weaned from it's Mother* ; he must estrange himself oftentimes from those cheerful Entertainments, to which his Humour and his Temper are most fondly addicted ; *Self-love and Self-interest* must be rooted out of his Heart, nor must any thing be too dear to sacrifice to his Duty. He who has thus gained a Conquest over himself, who has thus *divorced himself from the World and the Flesh* ; is in a due Posture of Mind to be *united to his Saviour* ; to be *his Disciple* who has positively assured us, *That if any Man will come after him, he must deny himself.*

In my following Discourse upon which Words, I shall make use of this plain and easie Method.

1st. I shall endeavour to explain and state rightly, the great Duty of *Self-denial*, and shew wherein the Exercise of it does properly consist. And,

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2^{dly}. I

2dly. I shall lay down some powerful Motives, which may forcibly perswade us to the Practice of it.

1st. Then I shall endeavour to explain and state rightly, the great Duty of *Self-denial*, and shew wherein the Exercise of it does propriety consist.

And here it is worth our Observation, that as most People are apt to set narrow Bounds to this Duty, and to *confine* and *contract* it within too *small* a Compass; so by some few it is strained to too *great* a Latitude, and made to intrench upon that *Christian Liberty*, which is the *Birth-right* and *Privilege* of every *Christian*. And tho' this (I must confess) is an error on the right Hand, and such as we need not fear very many will fall into; yet that we may discharge our Duty in just Measure, by steering on safely betwixt the two Extreames; let us *inform* our *Judgment* and *govern* our Practice of it, according to these following Regulations.

1st. The

1st. The Exercise of *Self-denial* does not consist, in utterly refusing without Distinction, all such things as we are inclined to.

For this were to contradict our Saviour's gracious Assurance, *That his Yoke is easie and his Burthen light*; by making the Obligations which he lays upon us, not only *heavy* but *intollerable*; since it is as *unnatural* and *impossible* to deny ourselves in *everything*, as it is *unchristian* and *unreasonable* to deny our selves in *nothing*. God, tho' the absolute *Lord* of all the Earth, yet exercises his unlimited *Dominion* over us, as a *merciful Prince*, not as a *rigid Tyrant*; he never gave us *Appetites* to torment us with their *Cravings*, whilst he tied us up from allowing them any moderate *Gratification*: *Reason* indeed and *Religion* must assign them their just *Limits*, and restrain them from *licentious* and *extravagant Excesses*; they must and ought to keep the *Man*, from *sordidly degenerating* into a *Beast*; but they can never divest him of his *Humanity*.

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ty; or change him perfectly into an *Angel*; that will be the Improvement of *another* State, the distinguishing Advantage of a *blessed Immortality*: as long as we are on this side Heaven, we must have some Tincture of the Earth we are allied to; the *Corruptions* of our Nature will troublesomely beset us, and it's more *innocent Tendencies* agreeably affect us: and tho' Piety will oblige us to *correct* the *former*, yet it does not require that we should be insensible of the *latter*. To have created us without any Inclinations or Affections, had been inconsistent with the *Wisdom* of God, and had left us upon a level with Stocks and Stones; and to expose us continually to their restless Importunities, without allowing us to satisfy them in some Measure; is a direct Contradiction to the *divine Goodness*, since it would render us more wretched than those inanimate Beings: The *one*, would be like *cutting out* all the Strings of an Instrument, instead of *skilfully ordering* and *putting them in Tune*; the *other*, like *letting them down* till they are jarring or insipid, to avoid

void the contrary extream of *winding* them up *too high*, and either is destructive of that agreeable *Harmony*, which would certainly result from *regulating* them duly. Since then Religion does not *destroy*, but only *improve* our human Nature; since God does not at all require it at our Hands, that we should cease to be Men whilst we continue to be *Christians*; we may safely conclude, according to my first Maxime, that the Exercise of *Self-denial* does not consist, in utterly refusing without Distinction, all such things as we are inclined to. But,

2dly. Neither does the Exercise of *Self-denial* at *present* consist, in such a constant and entire with-drawing from wordly Enjoyments, as was necessarily practiced by the first Converts of *Christianity*.

The primitive Disciples of the *bles-sed Jesus*, were called to *Sufferings* when they were called to *Christianity*; and it was one Condition of their Disciple-ship, *that they should leave all* and

and follow him : Scourgings and Imprisonments for his Names-sake, were their unavoidable and most easie Tryals ; the Axe and the Gibbet were ever in their View, and they were literally baptized into the Death of Christ : Then it was declared that if any Man came unto him, and did not hate Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Sisters, yea and his own Life also, he could not be his Disciple. And when Religion laboured under such unhappy Circumstances as these, it was absolutely necessary that the Professours of it; should disengage themselves in the highest Measure from all temporal Enjoyments; should renounce every thing that might incline them to be fond of this Life ; that so by the severest uninterrupted Self-denials, they might prepare themselves to undergo the most grievous Inflictions, and reach the Crown of Martyrdom after which they aspired. But when God has so happily changed the Affairs of his Church, giving her Peace within her Palaces and Plenty within her Borders ; when instead of Heathen Emperours to persecute and oppress her, she
has

has *Kings* for her nursing-Fathers and *Queens* for her nursing-Mothers; when the Name of *Christian* is no longer a *Reproach*, but a *Mark of Honour* even to the greatest upon Earth: that the *same Austerity* should be still exacted, the *same Discipline* of *Severity* be still kept up; would argue an *Insensibility* of that blessed *Alteration*, and too stupid an *Unchangeableness* under such differing *Providences*. As therefore it is the Wish of all good Men, that *Professours* now a days would make it their Endeavour, to imitate the *first Christians* in their unblamable Conversation; so can it not be expected that they should exactly copy out, the Constancy of their *Mortifications* and the Strictness of their *Self-denials*. All Duties are not to be performed at all times in their utmost Extent; but the Choice and Measure of them is to be determined, according to the Diversity of Seasons and Affairs: As we must not convert our *Feasts* into *Vigils*, nor change the *cheerful Gaiety* of the one, into the *solemn Gravity* of the other; so neither must we manage our selves in every thing alike, when

when we are *blessed* with *Prosperity*, and *visited* with *Adversity*. When God is pleased to favour us in our outward Condition, we may moderately *rejoice in the good Things of this Life*, thankfully *looking up to the Hand that gave them*, without obliging ourselves to such an entire renunciation of them, as was necessarily practised by the *first Converts to Christianity*. But,

3dly. The Exercise of *Self-denial* does indispensably consist, in a total Forbearance of *unlawful Enjoyments*, however fondly we may be inclined or addicted to them.

Ever since the Depravation of human Nature, by the *original Fall* of our first unhappy Parents, there is an inbred *Seed of Corruption* within us, which frequently *springs up* in evil Inclinations, in opposition to our Duty and the Will of God: This is what the Apostle stiles a *Law within his Members*, because it was at Enmity with the *Law of God in his Spirit*; and what he afterwards calls

a *Body of Death*, as being directly contrary to that *principle of Life*, by which every good Christian is more or less actuated: This was that *Messenger* (as he tells us) of *Satan*, which was sent to buffet this great *Apostle*, least he should be exalted overmuch; and from which he so passionately begs to be released, *Miserable Man that I am! who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death!* And I question not but the Experience of every one will convince them, that we all labour under the same Inconveniences; that we have many inordinate Desires to struggle with, whose Extravagance cannot be curbed without the utmost Difficulty; and it will be no Excuse for us to say that they are *natural*, since the *God of Nature* has commanded us to restrain them: And indeed we do but prevaricate when we make use of *that* Plea, since tho' the *Appetite* may be natural, the *Excess* of it cannot be so, every *extream* being a Force upon *Nature*. Here then the Advice of the *Apostle* must take place, to *mortifie our Members which are upon the Earth, Fornication, Uncleaness, and*
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the like: And the Propension which we find to such forbidden Impurities, must be so far from prevailing upon us to give way to them; that they must engage us to stand more carefully upon our Guard, lest at any time we should fall into them *through the Deceitfulness of Sin.* *Christian Liberty* must not be abused, to the Patronage and Abettment of such unwarrantable Proceedings; that has its just *Limits* which it cannot exceed safely, and a *Confinement to Goodness* is the truest *Freedom*: For since we are brought into the clear *Light of the Gospel*, as well as into the glorious *Liberty of the Sons of God*, we must be guided by the one, if we would be privileged by the other; and not suffer these too great Advantages, to be at variance between themselves, otherwise our boasted *Freedom* will degenerate into *Looseness*; and we shall turn this glorious *Liberty of the Sons of God*, into the loathsome *Licentiousness* of the *Children of the Devil*: And therefore it is elegantly described by *St. James*, to be the perfect *Law of Liberty*; there is an *Obligation* in it as well as a *Concession*,
and

and it has an agreeable Mixture both of Favour and *Restraint*. We are indeed *enfranchised* by it from the *Vassalage* of Sin, and from the *burthensome* and *numerous Impositions* of the Law; but we are by no means acquitted from our *Obedience* to our *Benefactor*; but our *Obligations* of Duty to *him* are so much the more strong, by how much more we are *exempted* from all *other Servitude*. And therefore,

4thly. The Exercise of *Self-denial* does farther consist, in weaning our selves from all such *Entertainments*, as may with-hold or divert us from the *Service* of God.

There are many things which may appear lawful, when they are barely considered in themselves; which yet it will be convenient to deny our selves the use of, upon the account of some particular *Circumstances*. Those common *Recreations* which are the most innocent, if they take up such a portion of our *Time*, as to invade any *Offices* of a higher Nature, ought certainly to be retrenched

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to make way for the other; and that for this easie and unanswerable Reason, because we are positively *obliged* to the *latter*, and but barely *allowed* in the *former*. Thus *walking* and *riding* are most useful Diversions, and have not the least Shadow of Unlawfulness in them; but if those Times shall be chosen for such Employments, which should be spent in the *publick Worship of God*, or in a *private Intercourse* between him and our Souls; we ought rather to abridge our selves in Relation to *them*, than run any Hazard of omitting the *other*: The harmless *Conversation* of worthy Friends, and the civil *visits* which we make to our Acquaintances, is another Entertainment that is blameless and commendable; but if *that Day* chiefly shall be pitched upon for such Practices, which is peculiarly set apart for *God's Service*, they must then juggle out much more necessary Performances, and they cease by so doing to be any longer innocent: A moderate and thankful *Enjoyment* of *God's Creatures*, is very allowable for our Pleasure and Refreshments; but
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if any one shall perceive that by partaking of these, he is more indisposed for the Performance of his Duty, and that the *Flesh* begins to grow too head-strong for the *Spirit*; he is then obliged to deny himself in such a Measure, as may be consistent with true Piety and the Exercises of Religion: It is not enough in such a case that he only abstains from *vicious Excesses*, but he must even retrace all *inconvenient Liberties*; not only laying aside every *Sin* but every *Weight*, which may hinder him from running the Race that is set before him. And this is the true Meaning of St. Paul's Assertion, That all things are lawful for us but all things are not expedient; that tho' we are privileged above the *Jews*, and may make use of many *Freedom*s which were forbidden to them; yet our *Christian Liberty* must be always bounded by our *Christian Prudence*, and the *Convenience* of our Actions must be consulted together with their *Lawfulness*. And to this the *Apostle* then exhorts us, not only in relation to *our selves*, but upon account of their Expediency

also in Respect of our Neighbour.
And therefore

5thly. The Exercise of *Self-denial* does also consist, in avoiding such things, as are neither unlawful nor inconvenient for us, if by using them we give just Offence to our Brethren.

We have already seen that the variety of Circumstances, gives a differing turn to most of our Actions ; that such Proceedings as are *innocent* upon some Occasions, become *faulty* and *censurable* upon others ; and the Rule holds in *Persons* as well as in *Seasons* ; some may very blamelessly be conversant in such Practises, as others cannot imitate without running into an Error. Thus for instance, those who are remarkable for *Quality* or *Wealth*, may lawfully keep up a *becoming Magnificence*, and distinguish themselves from others by their *Habit* and *Expences* ; while such as are of a *lower* and more *mean* Condition, would run into *Extravagance* should they follow their Example : and yet we find this Folly too rife in the Age we live in ;
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most People strain themselves to equal those above them, and not a few have been ruined by this Affectation of Greatness: it would therefore be a very *honourable Condescension*, and such a *Self-denial* as is extremely *Christian*; if the *great ones* would give others an Example of Moderation; and not conforming wholly to the Fashions of the World, shame them into a compliance with their Condition, by voluntarily waving some of the Privileges of *their own*. It were very much to be wished for the Happiness of this Nation, that *sumptuary Laws* were enacted and put in Force, by which the Rank and the *Way of living* might answer to each other; but no better Expedient can be found in the Interim, than that part of *Self-denial* which I have now been recommending; a method which would at once answer the end we speak of, and be also subservient to the great Duty of *Charity*, by turning *superfluity* into the Relief of *Necessity*. St. Paul informs us in relation to himself, *that if Meat* (the use of which he had determined to be lawful) *should* (by a

Supposition of it's being offered to an Idol) occasion his weak Brother to offend ; he would eat no Flesh whilst the World did stand, rather than he would make his Brother to offend : I would to God we were all resolved to transcribe his Example, and to be Followers of him even as he also was of Christ. And now if such innocent things as these, may become thus fatal and pernicious unto others ; what shall we judge of such irregular Actions, as more immediately lead our Brethren into Sin ? But these fall under the other head of things *unlawful*, and therefore I shall wave the insisting upon them here.

6thly. and Lastly, The Exercise of *Self-denial* does undoubtedly consist, in being habitually prepared to renounce all things, even our most dear and most lawful Enjoyments, whenever God or Religion shall require it at our Hands.

Tho' by the wonderful Mercy of God towards these Nations, we have hitherto been rescued from the Judgments which hung over us, yet we
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cannot fure forget how near overwhelming us they were; had not he miraculously interposed in our behalf, we had long since made the sad Experiment; how far our *Self-denial* would have extended, when we were called upon to exercise it in the highest Degree; we must e're now in probability, have given up all things that were dear to us, or our *Holy Religion* which should be dearer than all: we cannot but have observed what eminent *Self-denials*, some of our neighbouring fellow *Christians* have been necessitated to practice; and if *Christ* should call *us* to the *Discipline of the Cross*, (as God knows how soon his Providence may so order it;) we must either basely wave the confessing him before Men, and so forfeit being confessed by him before his heavenly Father; or we must renounce our Possessions, our Liberties and our Lives, if they happen to stand in Competition with our Duty. Even now when we seem serious against such fatal Extremities, we must fix within our Minds strong and secure *Resolutions*, of acting thus if ever we are called to such

a Tryal: this *Habit of Self-denial* must be imprinted upon our Souls, that it may at all times be ready to be reduced into *Action*: But *Habits* (we know) are *acquired* by frequent *Acts*, and *kept up* afterwards by constant *Exercise*; and therefore it is impossible we should be thus prepared, unless we accustom our selves in some Measure to the Practice of this Duty; since we can never be secure of the Sincerity of our Hearts, unless by the truest of all Touch-stones, Experience: if we can deny our selves in a *less Degree*, when all things go smoothly and successfully with us; we may then well rely upon *greater Performances*, when our Affairs shall afford us a more melancholly *Prospect*: but if we make no Essay of our selves before hand, it is likely we shall disappoint our own Expectations; and shall scarce do that *at once* under a *violent Surprise*, which we would not advance *a Step* in when we were free from all *Disorder*. Unless we have been used to *wean* our selves from the *World*, we shall but *cling* more closely to it, when it is about to be ravished from

from us ; and the *renouncing of all Enjoyments* will be impracticable to those, who have not been accustomed to *deny themselves in any*.

And thus much shall suffice, as to the *1st.* general Head of my Discourse ; namely, to explain and state rightly the great Duty of *Self-denial*, and to shew wherein the Exercise of it does properly consist. It does not oblige us, to avoid every thing that we are inclined to, nor to carry it so high as the first Converts did ; but we must wholly abstain from all things unlawful, and from such as are a hindrance to the Service of God, or may give just Offence to our Christian Brethren ; and we must always be prepared to deny every thing that is dear to us, when the cause of God or Religion exacts it at our Hands. I proceed in the

2d. Place, To lay down some powerful *Motives*, which may forcibly persuade us to the Practice of this Duty. And

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1st. The *Example of our Blessed Saviour*, should strongly engage us to the Performance of this Duty, and to deny our selves in Imitation of him.

Never was *Self-denial* so wonderfully exerted, as in this great and illustrious President; and that in respect of all those Endearments, with which the World endeavours to bribe it's Votaries; whether they be *Honour* or *Pleasure* or *Profit*. If we consider him in relation to *Honour*; how vast a pitch of *Grandeur* did he descend from, when he quitted the Bosom of his eternal Father; when *he who had a Name much higher than the Angels*, was contented to be ranked amongst *inferiour Creatures*! nay, when even amongst them, he took the *lowest* Station, and humbled himself to the *meanest* Quality and Condition? How mortified was he towards all earthly *Pleasures*, who made it his Choice to be a *Man of Sorrows*! who came into the World with that very Design, of *living severely and dying miserably*! who tho' he could command the *Stones to become Bread*, yet was willingly con-

contented to *fast* and to be *hungry*; and tho' he could have called for *ten Legions of Angels*, yet readily submitted himself to *Sufferings* and *Death*! How little did he consult his own *Profit* or *Interest*, who divested himself of all things but his *Innocence*, that he might thereby promote the *Advantage of others*! who had no *By-ends* of his own to carry on, but did all things for the universal *Good of Mankind*! who gave that blood for the *Price* of our *Redemption*, which in value exceeded a *1000 Worlds*! and expects no other *Return* for so amazing a *Liberality*, but the *Happiness* of those whom he has thus dearly purchased! These are the *Lessons of Self-denial*, which our *Saviour* has given us by his *Example*; and he will acknowledge none for his *Disciples* and *Followers*, who are not sometimes cloathed with this his *Livery*. If then we find our selves apt to be led away, with the *Pomps* and *Vanities* of this *World*; let us tell our own *Souls* that we are his *Followers*, who tho' he was the *Lord* of all, yet took upon himself the form of a *Servant*: If the *Pleasures of Sin* are likely to seduce us; let us arm our selves

selves against them with this Reflection; that we call our selves the *Disciples of him, who was wounded and bruised and acquainted with griefs*: If *Profits and worldly Riches* are about to entangle us; let us consider that we are commanded to *learn of him, who sought not his own Wealth but that of others, and without Prospect of Reward went about doing good*: such Considerations will probably encline us, to imitate a just Measure of our *Saviour's Self denial*; especially if we remember that he is *our Lord, and that the Servant is not greater than the Master*. But,

2dly. The *immediate* happy Consequences of such a Performance, and the *Advantages* that will attend it in *this present Life*, should powerfully perswade us to the Practice of this Duty.

Tho' this voluntary Penance which we impose upon our selves, be like other Chastnings and Inflictions, which for the present seem *not to be joyous but grievous*; yet afterwards (like them)

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it yields the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness, unto all such as are exercised thereby. We make our necessary Duties become easy to us, by being conversant in those which are not so absolutely required ; and we conquer the Difficulties of our future Obedience, by the restraint which we lay upon our present Inclinations. There are none of the Obligations which our Profession lays upon us, but what carry a Degree of Self-denial along with them ; and therefore every Act which we exercise of this Nature, influences the whole System of our Christian Duty : Faith cannot be well practised without denying carnal Reason, and giving up our selves in some Measure to Revelation ; Hope cannot be well settled without renouncing our fleshly Fears, and throwing us from our selves upon the Promises of God ; Charity cannot be exercised without deducting from our own, what may minister to the Wants of other People ; we cannot be temperate without denying our Appetites, nor patient without suppressing the murmuring of our Hearts : Thus every Christian Grace has something of
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Self-denial in it ; and the more we use our selves to *this* Qualification, in the greater Perfection shall we discharge them *all*. But as this, when once we are *Masters of it*, overcomes all the *Hardships of Christianity*; so does it make *every Condition of Life*, become *tollerable and easy* to its Practitioners : He that has been accustomed to *deny himself in many things*, can be calm and contented with a *very little* ; and the *Vicissitudes of Fortune* can do no more to him, than he has made it his Business to do to himself : it only takes part of the Labour from him ; and what he used to cut off by *Self-denial*, *Adversity* retrenches from him to his Hands. But how unfit are they to *wrestle with Afflictions*, who have never thus inured themselves to such a *Warfare* ; Every cross Accident frets and compasses them, every Disappointment grates their very Souls ; they are so used to *Indulgence*, that the least *Severity* undoes them ; and having constantly *humoured their Passions at Home*, they cannot bear at any time to have them *thwarted from abroad* : a most unhappy Temper in a World so full of Miseries, that
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sooner or later we must expect our share of them ! We should therefore apply that *Discipline to our selves*, which we often make use of Successfully towards *our Children* ; by denying them the *slightest Bawble* which they cry for, we make them afterwards part willingly with *more valuable Trifles*. This will bring us to such a happy Temper of Mind, as will make us *re-sign ourselves* in all Dispensations; and by *humbling our selves under the mighty Hand of God*, will dispose him to exalt us in due Time. But

3dly. and Lastly. The vast Reward which is annexed to this Performance, and the benefit which will redound to us from it in *another World*, should most forcibly induce us to the practice of this Duty.

As there are *Degrees of Perfection* in this Life, so are there of *Happiness* in the next; and a very laudable *Ambition* it is to *aspire*, to as *high* a Station as we can in that *heavenly Kingdom*: there is no fear that we should be *too good here*, and it is as impossible we should be

be too happy hereafter ; and therefore every thing which tends to the Improvement of both States, ought very eagerly to be contended for by us : but *Self-denial* (we see) is highly instrumental to the one, and must therefore by consequence be subservient to the other. He that offers up the *most estimable Sacrifice*, is likely to have his *Oblation* best accepted ; if one cuts off a right Hand or plucks out a right Eye, and another only foils some very weak Temptation ; it is easie to determine to which of the two, God who is *Justice in Perfection*, will assign the greatest *Recompence of Reward*. If the *Captain of our Salvation* was not made perfect but through *Sufferings*, can we his *Souldiers* expect to be accepted more easily. The more we resemble him, the dearer we are to God ; and according to the *Measure* that we deny our selves for him here, in the same *Proportion* shall we be blessed with him hereafter. And how infinitely happy will such an Exchange be ! when from the continual struggle in which we were engaged, we shall remove to a State of *Peace and Serenity* ! when from curbing our Affections and keeping

keeping them *low*, we shall come to have them *satisfied* in their *utmost Capacities*; when the *Weariness* is over of the *Fight* and the *Race*, and the *Wrath* and *Crown of Victory* are just putting up on our Heads! How vastly shall we then find our selves over paid, for those little *Self-denials* which we were obliged to practice! and how justly shall we adore God's infinite Goodness, in appointing such an *eternal Weight of Glory*, as the Reward of *Uneasinesses* that were so *light and momentary*! If then we had not the Encouragement of our Saviour's *Example*, whose Life was composed of *Self-denials*; if there were no Advantages accruing in *this Life*, as the *immediate Consequences* of this Duty; yet would *this single Motive* suffice to enforce the Practice of it, that it entitles us to a *Well-done* as *good and faithful Servants*, and qualifies us for *entering into the Joy of our Lord*. Let us then accustom our selves to the Exercise of this Duty: and not suffer any seeming Hardships, which are easily conquerable by a stedfast Resolution, to divert us from so commendable, so necessary a Performance, and which is attended

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tended by a Train of such happy Consequences. Let us first use our selves to *Self-denial* upon *small* Occasions, and endeavour to *familiarize* our selves with it by *Degrees*; and we shall soon come to *wrestle* with *greater Tryals*, and in *them all be more than Conquerers*. Thus we may go on from *Strength to Strength*, till we gain an entire *Mastery* over all our Affections; and arrive even in *this Life* at such a State of *Perfection*, as may wholly *superseede* the farther Practice of this *Duty*: our *Wills* being so resigned to the *Will of God*, and our *Inclinations* so habituated to tend to the best *Objects*; that the *Pantings* of our *Hearts* will be only after *Holiness*, and we must *deny our selves* if we would be *wicked*. To this happy *Condition* of mind in *this Life*, and to the eternal *remuneration* of it in a *better*, God of his infinite Mercy conduct us all, through the Merits and Mediation of our Blessed Saviour, To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. *Amen.*

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*Phil. 4th. chap. and 5th.
Verse.*

*Let your Moderation be
known unto all Men.*

HOW distant and remote from one another, are the Oeconomy of the *Law* and that of the *Gospel* ! In the *former* God acts as an *absolute Master* ; and some of his Injunctions seem to have no other tendency, but to assert the *indisputable Authority* of the *Law-giver* ; in the *latter*, he takes upon him the Character of an *indulgent Father* ; and consults nothing else in all his Commands, but the *common Benefit* of his *Children* : and therefore, in the *one*, the Jew by a *slavish Fear*, was awed into the

the Performance of the *Duty* of a *Servant*; in the *other*, the Christian by a *filial Reverence*, is incited to discharge the *Obedience* of a *Son*. In consequence of this *various* way of proceeding with them, how *different* a *Disposition* and *Temper* of *Mind*, did *that Spirit of Bondage* and *this Law of Liberty*, produce and cultivate in their several *Professours*! The *legal Dispensation* inclined it's Followers, to be *rigid* in their *Censures*, and *supercilious* in their *Behaviour*; and the very *Design* for which it seems to be calculated, was to *distinguish one people* from the *rest* of *Mankind*; whilst the *Christian Religion* obliges it's *Disciples*, to be *favourable* in their *Judgments* and *affable* in their *Conversation*; and appears to be directed to the great and useful *End*, of *reconciling* and *uniting* *all the Nations* of the *Earth*. If *Messiah* the *Prince* under the *Old Testament*, is called the *Lion* of the *Tribe of Judah*; *Jesus* the *Saviour* is filed under the *New*, the *Lamb* that was slain from the *Foundation* of the *World*: and though *Saul* the *Jew* is represented to us, as *breathing out Threatnings* and *Slaughter* against the *Church*;
yet

yet we find *Paul the Christian* giving this *charitable Lesson*, let your *Moderation* be known unto all Men. A Lesson so full of the *true Spirit* of the Gospel, so instrumental towards promoting that universal Benignity, that *Good-will amongst Men* which it was designed to establish; that we can scarce pretend to be *Christians* unless we are acted by it; and feel it produce within us such *Fruits of the Spirit*, as *Love and Peace and Gentleness and Long-suffering*.

In my following Discourse upon this useful Subject, I shall briefly insist upon these 5 Particulars.

1st. I shall explain the *Nature* of this *Duty*, and shew in what this *Moderation* recommended in my Text, does properly consist.

2^{dly}. I shall prove that it is not sufficient, barely to be possessed of this *Duty of Moderation*; unless we express it upon all just Occasions; and let this *Moderation of ours* be known.

3dly. I shall examine the *Extent* of this *Duty*; that it must not be confined to any Parties or Professions, but we must *let our Moderation be known unto all Men*.

4thly. I shall lay down some powerful *Inducements*, which may forcibly engage us to the Practice of *this Duty*. And,

5thly and lastly, I shall answer some *Objections*, which may possibly be raised against the Performance of it.

1st. Then I shall explain the *Nature* of *this Duty*; and shew, in what this *Moderation* recommended in my Text, does properly consist.

The Word which is here expressed by *Moderation*, is in the Original *Ἐπεικία*, and has been rendered divers Ways by different Interpreters: In the *Rhemish Testament* we find it thus expounded, *Let your Modesty be known unto all Men*; in the old *Translation of the Bible* the Exhortation runs thus, *Let*

your

The Tenth Sermon.

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your Patience be known unto all Men; but in the latter and more correct Version which we now make use of, it is as you have heard it read to you in the Words of my Text, Let your Moderation be known unto all Men: Now tho' 'tis true, that each of these Interpretations, may be very well justified from the original Expression, which is large enough to take in all these several Significations; yet this certainly of our Bibles is the fullest of any, as virtually containing in it the other two; since Moderation does evidently imply, the double Notion both of Modesty and Patience; Modesty, in relation to our Opinion of our selves, and Patience in respect of our Management towards others,

For by *Moderation*, I here understand, such an *inward Disposition* and *outward Behaviour*, as may qualifie *all* Persons (however differing in their Opinions,) to *live together in Peace and Unity*, and perform *mutual Offices* of *brotherly Love*.

In order therefore to state rightly the *Nature* of this *Duty*, I shall briefly

ly consider it under a *double Capacity*; 1st. as it has a *Regard* to our *inward Disposition*; and 2^{dly}, as it has an *Eye* to our *outward Carriage*.

1st. Then let us enquire into the *Nature of this Duty*, as it has a *Regard* to our *inward Disposition*.

That *Moderation* which is exercised within us, and which is the *Source* and *Fountain* of all *Actions* of that *Nature*; must consist in an *humble Estimation* of our *selves*, and a *charitable Concern* for the *good of others*; it must consist in an *humble Estimation* of our *selves*; nothing being more contrary to the *Nature* of this *Duty*, than too high a *valuation* of our own *Deserts*, and a *vain-glorious Opinion* of the *Advantages* we possess: by this *Temper* of *Mind* we are rendered *incapable* of bearing any thing that looks like *Contradiction*; we grow *uncharitable* in our *Censures*, *severe* in our *Reflections*, and *hasty* and *violent* in our *Determinations*; it *indisposes* us for *judging truly*, either of *Persons* or of *things*; *Prejudice* over-swaying us in relation
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to the *former*, and Self-sufficiency biasing us in respect of the *latter* : When *Vanity* has got this unhappy Ascendant over us, we seldom examine how agreeable or inconsistent, the Cause that comes before us is with *Reason* or *Religion* ; but how conformable or disproportionable it is to our *Notion* of things ; every Objection raised is an affront to our Understanding, and represented with a warmth more than equal to the Injury ; and every *Opposer* must needs be in the *wrong*, because we flatter our selves that *we* are always in the *right*. But where *Humility* has settled its peaceful Habitation, it influences the Soul after a much different Manner ; it gives us a just Prospect of our own Infirmities, convincing us how liable we are to Errors and Mistakes ; and therefore hinders us from an unreasonable stiffness in our Opinions ; makes us cautiously assure our selves of the Truth of our Assertions ; and tenderly compassionate the Misconceptions of others : it persuades us to ascribe our own Advantage, if we are better acquainted with *the things of God*, to no Merit of our own above our Fellow-Creatures,

Creatures, but only to resolve it into the divine Goodness; and this Consideration may engage us to pity those, who are not yet possessed of such inestimable Benefits; but will certainly hinder us from adding to their Unhappiness, either by violent Actions or exasperating Expressions. But farther, this *inward* Principle of *Moderation*, as it must be grounded upon *Humility*, so must it also be supported by *Charity*; it is not enough that we entertain a *mean Opinion* of *our selves*, and retrench a too great Fondness for our own Advantages; if we do not at the same time *think worthily* of our *Brethren*, and endeavour as far as we can to promote their true Interest. This Grace will inform us that *Violence* can do nothing, but *widen* the Breach which we are attempting to *close up*; that whatever Kindness we may pretend for our Brother's Soul, a rough Application is much more likely, to make him arm against us than comply with us; that *Rigidity* and *Severity* are the Characters of an *Enemy*, which will render us *suspected* to him, and consequently *unsuccessful*; whilst he may
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insensibly be engaged by *Mildness* and *Civility*, to take us for *true Friends* and to *credit* us as *such*. The charitable Man will give great Allowances, for the *Force of Prejudice* and the *Prevalence of Education*; and will not presently be angry that they do not disengage themselves, who are to struggle with *Difficulties* so powerful as these; inveterate Customs (he knows) are not so easily got rid off; and he is therefore contented patiently to expect, and to wait for their removal by just Degrees. If all those hopeful Methods prove ineffectual, he is *sorry for them* not *incensed against them*; and is more truly affected with concern for *their Danger*, than he is discomposed at his own *Disappointment*: He looks upon them still as his *Fellow-Creatures*, the *Objects* of the same good and watchful *Providence*; and will not set himself at a *greater distance* from them, because he cannot bring them so *near him* as he would. Thus is he disposed by this *divine Grace of Charity*, as far as it is possible and as much as in him lies, to promote the good of the *whole Creation*, and not only to *live peaceably* but *lovingly* with

with all Men. These are those Principles, which are necessarily subservient, to the Production and Practice of *Moderation*, as it has an Influence upon our *inward Disposition*; *Humility*, which inclines us to conceive *modestly* of *our selves*; and *Charity*, which disposes us to *wish well* to *others*. Let us consider the *Nature* of this *Duty*.

2dly. As it has an Eye to our *outward Behaviour*.

That *Moderation* which affects our *outward Actions*, consists in *Gentleness* and *Affability*, in a *decent Carriage* and *respectful Treatment*: it sweetens all the *Harshness* and *Acerbity* of our *Natures*, it smooths the *Ruggedness* and plains the *Unevenness* of our *Tempers*, and imprints upon them the *Characters* of *Mildness* and *Civility*. A morose *Superciliousness* in *Behaviour*, an affected *Sowerness* in *Conversation*, and an uncharitable *Censoriousness* in reflecting and upbraiding; can never have any other Effect, but that of making people avoid and shun us; while they whose Actions are civil and obliging,

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whose Expressions are sweet and engaging, and whose whole Deportment is endearing and condescending; cannot chuse but prevail even upon the roughest Dispositions, and must make even *their Enemies to be at peace with them*. It is by a Temper thus tractable and complying, that the Delights and Advantages of Society are upheld; all mutual Commerce must fall to pieces, if every Man were wedded to his own Opinion; churlish in his Words, and rude in his Behaviour, to all such others as dissented from him: as long as there are *multitudes of Men* in the World, there will be a proportionable *Variety of Judgements*, nor does any one believe, because he *will* but must: And how unreasonable is it then to quarrel with another for what I my self practice, and for that which neither of us are able to avoid! I stand obliged indeed to use my utmost Endeavours, for unclouding his Understanding and rectifying his Notions; but I must be sure to do it after such a manner, as is agreeable to the Dictates of Charity and Civility; and I must take great Care that I am not hurried by Passion, into the Commission

mission of *one Fault* while I am trying to *correct another*. Brethren (says the Apostle) if a Man be overtaken in a Fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a One, in the Spirit of Meekness; *Καταπραΐνετε τὸν τοιοῦτον*. Set such a Man in joint. A Metaphor taken from the Duty of a Surgeon, in setting right a dislocated Member, which is to be done with all the Tenderness and Gentleness imaginable: and I would to God that all of us would practice this Lesson, and comport ourselves accordingly with that Gentleness and Meekness, towards all such as we conclude to be in Ignorance and Errour; as might happily convince them that our chief Design, is *their Information* not our *own Triumph*; and perswade them to acknowledge by the *Sweetness* of our *Deportment*, that we are not their *Enemies* while we speak unto them the Truth. If we would but allow this truly Christian Temper, to preside and govern in all our Disputations, we should prevent much of the Noise and Fury of our Contentions; we should defend our Opinions with soft Words and calm Passions, and study rather to *com-*
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pose than maintain the Contraverſy :
Such (ſays St. Paul) ſhould the *Servant*
 of the Lord be *ἀμωχος καὶ ἐπεινός*, not a con-
 tentious but a moderate Man, with Meek-
 neſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe them-
 ſelves.

Such a Moderation then as I have
 been deſcribing, would beget ſuch good
Humours, ſuch good *Manners* among
 Chriſtians, as would make them con-
 verſe together without provoking one
 another, or diſturbſing the Society of
 which they are Members: ſo our Bleſ-
 ſed Saviour lived in the World, com-
 plying with all the innocent Cuſtoms
 of the *Jewiſh Nation*, and recommend-
 ing his own Doctrine with *Gentleneſs* and
Love: ſo lived St. Paul, and ſo he has
 taught us to live; give none Offence, (ſays
 he) neither to the Jew, nor the Gentile,
 nor to the Church of God; even as I pleaſe
 all Men in all things, not ſeeking mine
 own Profit but the Profit of many.

And thus much ſhall ſuffice on my
 firſt General Head, which was to en-
 quire into the Nature of Moderation, as it
 works inwardly and as it acts outwardly;
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in the *first* it consists in *Humility* and *Charity*, in the *last* it is exemplified by *Meekness* and *Affability*. I proceed now to prove in the

2d place, That it is not sufficient barely to be possessed of this Duty of *Moderation*, unless we express it upon all just Occasions, and let this *Moderation* of ours be known.

All *Habits* however excellent are insignificant, unless they are made *practical*, and reduced into *Action*: and as there are some amongst the Christian Graces, which being properly to be transacted between God and our Souls, cannot therefore be made publick without the Hazard of *Vanity*; so there are others whose Performance being generally beneficial, and having Respect to the good of others as much as of our selves; they must therefore be practiced in a more open manner, the World being the Stage upon which they ought to be acted: in relation to such Actions as *these* it is that our *Blessed Saviour*, (who in other Cases condemns the doing our Duty too publickly

lickly, and brands it with the odious Character of *Hypocrisie*,) commands us to let our Light shine before Men, that they may see our good Works: Now all those Virtues which tend more immediately, to the Advancement of the Ease and Benefit of *Society*, must needs be supposed to be of such a Nature; and of these, *Moderation* is one of the chiefest; nothing being more serviceable to the good of a *Community*, than those amicable Principles of *Charity* and *Humility*, that agreeable *Deportment* and *affable Behaviour*, in which the Exercise of this *Duty* has been shewn to consist: and therefore if our Minds are thus happily disposed, and our Carriage tempered with this amiable Complacency; we must not lay up our Talent in a Napkin, but endeavour to make it produce five-fold or ten-fold; by inviting others to an equal Condescension, and influencing them by our good Example: How useful a member must he be, of any Society that is blessed with his Fellowship, who not only expresses his own *Moderation*, upon every occasion that is fit to exercise it; but invites others also by the Beauty of his Practice,

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&c.

ctice, to engage the Pursuit of the same happy Management ! In the degenerate Age in which we live, how many *Dissensions* and *Animosities* are set on foot ! How many *Divisions* are there in our Church, how many *Fractions* in our State ! and to what can we impute all these dismal Consequences, but to the *fiery Temper* of some in all Parties ; who by uncharitable Actions and disobliging Reflections, exasperate those of a different Opinion, and *blow up the Coals* of Contention into a *Flame* ? And if (as blessed be God sometimes we see it) these Oppositions do at any time cease, and some Advances seem to be made towards Union and Agreement ; it is wholly owing to the *Moderation* of some, which tempers the *Violence* and *Severity* of others : They therefore who are so truly Masters of themselves, as to be able to act after so engaging a Manner ; are highly obliged to lay hold upon every Opportunity, by which they may manifest and encourage a procedure, that is so vastly instrumental to the common good of Mankind : and they are no more excusable who content themselves in such a case, with not
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having contributed to these Ruptures, unless they endeavour to compose the Differences; than a Man would be who in a general Conflagration, when all Hands should be at work to stop it's Progress; should lazily set still and think he had done enough, in not being the Person that first kindl'd the Fire; without giving any Assistance towards extinguishing the Flame, or casting on one Bucket to abate its Violence. Thus we have seen, that it is not sufficient, that we have these *inward Principles of Moderation*; unless we *exert* them, and make them *useful*; that this *like Faith without Works is dead*; and this happy Disposition is but thrown away upon us, unless we *let our Moderation be known*. But because some may yet be unhappily mistaken, and think themselves safe if they discharge this Duty, in relation to *some Persons* whom they judge of more favourably, tho' they act quite contrary in respect of *some others*; I therefore proceed to my

3^d General head, namely to examine the *Extent* of this Duty; that

it must not be confined to any Parties or Professions, but we must *let our Moderation be known unto all Men.*

This *Moderation* has a *universal* Respect to *all Mankind*, in the *inward* Habit or Disposition of our Mind ; and regards every *particular* Man with whom we converse, in the *actual* Exercise and Performance of it: and therefore they shamefully elude this Precept, who will use it only towards their *own Party* ; who consent with them, and consequently need no Condescension from them ; whereas it chiefly relates to *such as are at difference* with us, for containing us together within the *Bond of Peace*. All Men therefore are concerned in this excellent *Grace*, either as a *Duty* which they ought to *perform*, or as an *Advantage* which they ought to *enjoy* ; and as no Person can be *above* an *Obligation* to this Duty, so none can fall *beneath* the *Priviledge* of it : It has always been the *Glory* of the *Church of England*, to distinguish it self from all other Professions, by a *Charity* the largest and most diffusive of any ; it liberally extends its good Wishes and
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its Hopes, to those who are entitled to them by any Degree of Possibility; and has undoubtedly the greatest Share of that *universal* Love, which *Christ* has declared to be the *Livery* of his *Disciples*. She does not pretend invidiously to *confine*, those *glad Tidings* of great *joy* which should be to all *People*, within the narrow Pale of a *particular Church*; nor presumptuously appropriates the *Title of God's Children*, to the Defenders of some whimsical enthusiastick Delusions; but extends her Arms, like her Master upon the Cross, to take in all that will accept of them into her Embraces. How must it then misbecome any of *her Children*, to proceed by morose or uncharitable *Methods*; or to asperse their *Mother* by any *narrow Principles*, which are inconsistent with the *innocent Latitude* that she gives? If they are *Christians* we deal with (tho' unhappily misled) they have *Christ* for *their head* and *us* for fellow *Members*; and *no Man* ever hated his own *Flesh*, but loves and cherishes it as *Christ* does the *Church*: if they are but *meer Men* out of the power of the *Gospel*, they have *God* for their *Creator* and *us* for *Fellow-Creatures*; and

there is a *Degree of Tenderness* due to that *Relation*: Be they what they will, we are bound to wish them well, and to do good to all, as far as we are capable; and this can never be done with any Prospect of Success, unless our Endeavours are accompanied by such a *Moderation*, as may convince them in the Apostle's Phrase, *that we speak the Truth in Love*. This is truly to be *Members* of the Church of England; this is truly to follow the *Example* of our Saviour, who would not break the bruised Reed, who went about continually doing good, and rejoiced as a strong Man to run this his Race; whilst the happy Influence of the Sun of Righteousness, was as universal as that of the natural One; like that it went forth from the uttermost part of Heaven, and ran about unto the Ends of it again, and there was nothing hid from the Heat thereof. Having thus seen the Nature of this excellent Duty, the Obligations we lye under of making constant Use of it, and the Largeness of it's Extent which takes in the whole Creation, I proceed now in the

4th. place according to my Method; to offer and lay down some powerful Inducements, which may forcibly engage Men to the Practice of this Duty.

Whatever is consistent with our Duty and our Interest, and is instrumental at the same time to the Happiness of others; can need no other Argument to recommend it to our Practice, can never be disregarded without an inexcusable Neglect; but this Moderation of which I have been discoursing, has all these Qualifications to entitle it to our Favour.

It 1st. consults both our Duty and our Interest.

The great Author and Finisber of our holy Faith, is stiled the Prince of Peace; the Law which he delivered, is the Gospel of Peace; and Peace was the last Legacy which he left to his Apostles: in order to convey to them this precious Advantage, he gave them a new Commandment to love one another; he broke down the Partition Wall betwixt Jew and

Gentile, and designed to make *both one Fold under one Shepherd* : instead of that *Stiffness* between different *Perfwasions*, which would not suffer the Professours of one to shew common *Civility* to the others ; he established amongst his Followers, an *universal Benignity* and *Condescension* : By this we are obliged to such a Government of our Spirits, as may enable us to *conduct* all our *Passions* with *Prudence*, to *check* them with *Modesty*, to *temper* them with *Humility*, to *soften* them with *Meekness*, to *sweeten* them with *Kindness*, to *strengthen* them with *Patience*, and to *restrain* them with *Forbearance* ; that so we may neither be apt to *quarrel* or *contend* with *others*, nor difficult to be *appeased* and *reconciled*, whatever *Provocations* or *Discouragements* we may meet with *our selves*. To this purpose it is that we are so earnestly exhorted, to *put on Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-Suffering, Forbearance and Forgiveness* ; and this is the *Disposition*, and these must be the *Practices*, by which we must approve our selves to be the *Followers of Jesus*. But as we are thus

thus clearly informed that this is our *Duty*, so may we plainly perceive that it is our *Interest* also; for nothing can make our Passage easie through a troublesome World, but such a prudent *Condescension* and *Management* as this; so great is the general Weakness and Ignorance, that it is not possible to converse familiarly, without *justling* and *disturbing* one another, unless we sometimes *recede* and *give each other the Way*: And therefore if we intend to maintain that quiet and commerce, in which the Happiness of this Life does mainly consist; we must often comply with the Failings of our Brethren, who are not able to discover that they are in the wrong: not that we must run into the same Errour with them, or sooth them in their Mistake with a vitious Complaisance; but should avoid insulting over them under their Unhappiness, and bear with them till they may be recovered out of it: This will preserve our Minds in a calm and even Posture, will make us *inwardly* enjoy much *Sereness* and *Tranquility*; and will also

also break the Force of all outward Violence; as a *Storm* acts inoffensively upon that which bends with it. But

2dly. As this is reconcileable to our Duty and our Interest, so is it also subservient to the *Happiness* of others.

Let the opposite Person be of never so fierce a Temper, his Fury must soon languish if it meets with nothing to resist it; nor can the *Flame* of Contention be kept long at a height, unless both Parties contribute *Fuel* to encrease the *Combustion*: and therefore all the Inconveniences which might arise, from continuing and fomenting the original Contest; are happily prevented by that useful *Moderation*, which cuts off the evil Consequences that must otherwise have happend. From how trifling an Occasion have great Divisions risen, when both sides have been resolved to stand by their own Opinions, and neither would in the least give allowance to the others! and how many Confusions might have been avoided, if this Christian *Mode-*

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ration had universally prevailed ! The Eastern Churches might yet probably have flourished, if they had been possessed of this happy Disposition : But when they banished that *Peace* and *Charity* from amongst them, which the Gospel was immediately designed to propagate ; when they divided into *Schisms*, and provoked each other, to *Malice* and *Rancour* and every evil Work ; destroying Religion by these very Controversies, in which they disputed with each other about it ; they wearied the long *Patience* and *Suffering* of God ; and gave a fair Opportunity by their obstinate *Disunion*, to the common Enemy of Christianity to break in upon them : A fair Remembrance for us under our unhappy Divisions, which weaken our selves and give Strength to our Adversaries. Nothing therefore can more advance the good of any Community, than such a due Moderation in it's several Members, as may incline one Party to live easily with another ; and whatever their private Disagreements may be, make them all conspire together for the Advantage of the publick. I might add to this in all Matters of Controversy,

versy, the great and well-grounded Probability there is, that such an obliging Management on the *one side*, may *reconcile* and *bring over* the *opposite Party*; since it cannot but convince him that no Injury is designed, and may consequently dispose him to weigh matters with less Prejudice. Thus we have seen how *this* excellent *Virtue*, has several strong Arguments to recommend it to our Practice; as it is *agreeable* to our *Duty*, *serviceable* to our *Interest*, and *instrumental* to promote the *Happiness* of *others*.

I now proceed in the

5th. and *last* place, to *answer* some *Objections* which may possibly be raised, against the Performance of this Duty.

The most material *Objections* that can be made, against the constant Practice of *Moderation*, are (I think) these two.

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us to be *wavering* and *unsettled* in matters of *Religion*.

2dly. That it will *hinder* and *obstruct* that *Zeal*, which is necessary to give Life to our *religious* Performances.

1st. Then it may possibly be *object- ed* against what I have said, that this *Moderation* which I recommend, will incline us to be *wavering* and *unsettled* in Matters of *Religion*. But it will be so far from having *that* Effect upon us; that nothing can confirm us more *stedfastly* and *unmoveably*, in the Belief and Practice of our most holy Profession, than a due and constant Performance of this Duty. For the *moderate* Person being diffident of himself, (*Moderation* as you have seen being grounded upon *Humility*) will never give an absolute and positive Assent, to any of the *weighty Doctrines* of *Religion*, till he has carefully weighed them, duly considered them, and examined the Grounds upon which they are established; He is much afraid that he may mistake, and therefore acts with great Caution and the utmost

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Security; he does not presently pin his *Faith*, upon any thing that is the *Notion* of the *Party* which he embraces; but is willing to discover, and confess, and renounce, whatever may appear to be doubtful or erroneous; and therefore he never *takes up an Opinion* but upon good *Reasons*, nor ever *lays it down* again but upon *better*: By this means he is always tenacious of the *Truth*, which is most heartily *espoused* where it is most fully *understood*; and is never fondly wedded to the maintaining of an *Errour*, because he readily rejects it when he discovers it to be *such*. Those who are of a Temper more *violent* and *eager*, engage with so much *Noise* in whatever they undertake; that if they happen to be in the wrong they are ashamed to acknowledge it, because the *World* must take *Notice* of their *Recantation*; if they happen to be in the *right*, (for with them it is but *accident*) *Religion* looses more by their Breach of *Charity*, than it can possibly gain by their greatest *Vehemence*; and they are the aptest of any to give up the Cause at last, because *Passion*, not

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Reason, is the Foundation which they build upon. There was a remarkable Instance to this purpose, in those *Eastern Churches* which I mentioned formerly; where it was observed, that the *hottest Contenders* about *Christianity*, became the first *Apostates* from it; and *having* wrangled away before the *Substance of Religion*, in uncharitable Strifes and Malice against each other; they were easily contented to give up the *Name* of it too, in compliance with the Pleasure of a successful *Conqueror*. But

2dly. It may further be *objected* against the Practice of this *Duty*, that it is likely to *hinder* and *obstruct* that *Zeal*, which is necessary to give Life to our *religious Performances*. But this can be no *Consequence* of our *Christian Moderation*, which is very consistent with a *well-regulated Zeal*. There are two sorts of *false Zeal*, which I readily confess, are wholly incompatible with the Exercise of this *Duty*; and these are, a *blind Zeal*, and a *furious Zeal*: The former can never be joyned with *Moderation*, because it springs from
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Pride as that does from *Humility*; and the *latter* can as little agree with this meek *Principle*, being grounded upon *Revenge* as that is upon *Charity*; By the *first* of these a *blind Zeal*, *St. Paul* was acted, before his *Conversion* to *Christianity*; and he says in relation to it, *That he was not meet to be called an Apostle, because he persecuted the Church of God*; by the *latter* a *furious Zeal*, the two *Disciples* were misled, who would have called down *Fire from Heaven* upon the *Samaritans*; and our *Saviour* tells them upon that Occasion, *That they knew not of what manner of Spirit they were*. This might be agreeable to the *Methods* of the *Law*, but is wholly inconsistent with the *Meekness* of the *Gospel*; the *Zeal* of a *Christian* must be *warm*, but not *too hot*; it must not be *violent*, because it must be *lasting*; and what it wants in *Degree*, it makes up in *Continuance*. *Moderation* therefore is so far from *obstructing*, that *temperate Zeal* which *Christianity* requires of us; that it *preserves* and *cherishes*, and *keeps* it always *lively*, by not suffering it to *spend* it self in *unnecessary Excursions*. Thus have I vindicated

cated this most excellent *Duty*, from the *double Objection* which may be raised against it; by shewing that it does not lead to *unsettledness* in *Religion*, nor contradicts that *Zeal* which is agreeable to our *Profession*.

And, O that this Mind were in us all, which was also in Christ Jesus! who tho he lived amongst the Contradictions of Sinners, amongst the Blasphemies and Persecutions of the worst of Men, yet when he was reviled, reviled not again; but pitied them and instructed them, prayed for them and died for them! The doing thus in Imitation of him here, will prepare us for the fruition of him hereafter; and for the Society of Saints and Angels; where there is no distinction of Sects or Parties, but Love and Peace flourish to all Eternity. To which blessed Fellowship God conduct us all, through the Merits and Mediation of our Blessed Saviour; To whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

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*Gal. the 4th. Chap. and
the 18th. Verse.*

*But it is good to be zeal-
ously affected, always in
a good thing.*

THere are *two* Sorts of Men
that call themselves *Christi-
ans*, who by their Conversa-
tion and Behaviour, bring a
greater Detriment to the *true Religion*,
than all the *open Opposition* of such as are
without us; and these are the *Libertine*
and the *Indifferent*; between whom, as
between two *Malefactors*, our holy *Pro-
fession*, like the *blessed Author* of it, is
crucified afresh, and put to open Shame:
The *former* of these has nothing of a
Christian but the *Name*, and endeavours

not to attain, so much as to a *Form of Godliness*; the latter proceeds after a more plausible Manner, but however is destitute of the *Power of it*: and indeed, though the *licentious Christian* is more *publickly* scandalous, yet the *lukewarm Professour* does more subtilly undermine the very Foundations of *Christianity*; for whilst the *other* seems to act out of *Inconsideration*, because he does not allow himself the time to reflect, or to examine the Excellency of the Rule which he transgresses; this appears to go on judiciously and deliberately, to have *weighed* in some measure the value of Religion, and then to have been *cold* in the Exercise of it, out of the mere Result of *Thought* and *Judgment*: The holy *Apostle* therefore, being well aware of the fatal Inconveniences, which attend a *Remissness* and *Indifference* of this Nature, cautions his *Galatians* against it, in the Words of my Text; exhorting them to be *fervent in Spirit*, to be *warm* and *vigorous* in *Devotion*; and having once directed their Endeavours to a deserving Object, to be constant and industrious in

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in the Prosecution of it. *It is good* (says he) *to be zealously affected, always in a good thing.*

In my following Discourse upon which Words, I shall insist upon these 3 particulars.

1st. I shall enquire into and describe the *Nature* of this *Duty*, and shew what it is to be *zealously affected*.

2^{dly}. I shall examine the necessary *Qualifications* of it, that it must be *always*, and in a *good thing*.

3^{dly}. I shall consider the *Character* and *Commendation* of it, that *it is good*. *It is good to be zealously affected, always in a good thing.*

1st. Then, I shall enquire into and describe the *Nature* of this *Duty*, and shew what it is to be *zealously affected*.

Zeal is that extraordinary *Application* of Mind, by which we are inclin'd to make our *Duty* our *Business* and our

Pleasure; and to be always conversant in the Practice of it, with such a proportion of *Diligence* and *Affection*, as is suitable to the vast Moment of so important an *Affair*: And therefore it is not any *single Grace*, but runs through the *whole System* of them, and gives *Strength* and *Vigour* to them *all*: if applied to *Faith*, it makes that *steadfast* and *unmoveable*, *operative* and *lively*; if joined with *Hope*, it makes that *firm* and *unchangeable*, *powerful* and *encouraging*; if referred to *Charity*, it makes that *fervent* and *conspicuous*, *diffusive* and *universal*; if it sheds it's Influence upon the *moral Virtues*, it *sublimates* and *exalts* them to a higher Degree, till it raises them to the *Standard* of *Christian Perfection*: without this, *Faith* would be no more than a *wavering Assent*, tossed to and fro by every *Wind of Doctrine*; *Hope* would be no better than a *doubtful Expectation*, unable to support us under the weakest *Tryals*; *Charity* would be nothing but a *faint Good-will*, unaccompanied with such *Actions* as are eminent and exemplary; and *all* the choicest *Lessons* and *Dictates* of *Morallity*, would want

want Force and Efficacy to restrain our Appetites, or to curb the Extravagancy of our Affections and Desires. *Zeal* is that *intense Eagerness* of the Soul, that *warm Concern* for the Glory of God, that *earnest desire* for promoting his Honour, that makes nothing seem difficult in order to that end, but prompts us to advance it with our most *heartly Endeavours*; it is that *active Principle* which sets us chearfully to work, and which keeps us to our Business without Weariness or Cessation; it effectually removes that *Laziness* and that *Indifference*, which are apt to make our Duty appear tedious or uneasie; and plants in their stead such a *Willingness* and *Ardour*, as may encourage us to go on with Comfort and Satisfaction; this will not suffer us to take up, with *slight Essays* and *imperfect Endeavours*; but engages us to proceed with *Courage* and *Resolution*, so *running as to obtain*, so *fighting as to conquer*; it lets us not sit down contented and at ease, because perhaps we have discharged a *cheap Obedience*, by the Practice of *such Duties*, as are attended with *no Difficulty*; but makes

us aim at the *highest* and most *elevated* Graces, though accompanied with the utmost *Hardships* and *Self-denials*; this roots out of our Minds that dangerous Opinion, that we have *advanced far enough* in the Ways of Godliness, and lye under no Necessity of *pressing any forwarder*; whilst it perswades us to *forget those things that are behind*, and to *reach forth to those things that are before*, for the *Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*: this *awakens* us whenever we grow *drowzy*, this *quickens* us whenever we grow *dull*, this *encourages* us and *eggs* us on, whenever we grow *restive* and *unwilling*; and never lets us *flag* or *languish* in our *Course*, till with *unwearied Industry* we have *reached the Goal*; thus does *Zeal*, continually *spur* and *incite* us forwards, continually makes us aim at and labour for *Perfection*; conducting us by degrees *from Strength to Strength*, till unto the *God of Gods* we *appear in Sion*. This is, in short, the *Nature* of that *Duty*, which the *Apostle* recommends to us in the Words of my Text, wherein he advises us to be *zealously affected*. I proceed

2dly. To

2dly. To examine, the necessary *Qualifications* of this Duty, that it must be practised *always*, and in a *good thing*.

Nothing can be more dangerous or destructive, than to be mistaken in a Matter of such Moment as this; and to suffer our *Zeal* to degenerate into a Fault, by being unattended with those commendable *Qualities*, which are indispensably required to perfect and compleat it. The first of these which I shall at present instance, as contained in the Words which are the Subject of this Discourse; is the employing our *Zeal* upon such an *Object*, as is *deserving* of that Fervour which we are about to express; or to use the Phrase of my Text, we must be *zealously affected in a good thing*. He that mistakes his Way at his first setting out, gets nothing else by all his Pains in going forward, but the being farther removed from his Journey's End; and he who addicts himself with Warmth and Earnestness, to the Pursuit of any thing that is not good, gains

gains no other Advantage by his most passionate Endeavours, but the distancing himself the more from the Exercise of that *Zeal*, which the *Apostle* in this place recommends to our Practice. For it is not barely the *Eagerness* and *Intention of Mind*, the *Industry* and *Vigour* of which we make use, that can truly deserve that estimable Character; but the directing of these to *such an End*, as may *justify* our most serious and hearty Applications: Men are often carryed with an uncontrollable Violence, to the Gratification of their Lusts and sensual Appetites; they sometimes express the greatest Fondness and Ardency, for advancing those Opinions to which they are biassed, by the Prejudices of Faction or of Education; but all the *Heat* which they shew upon such Occasions, is so far from being kindled by a *Christian Zeal*, that they may be truly said to be *set on Fire of Hell*: nothing can justly pretend to such a Title, but what has for it's Object, either 1st. the *Glory* of God, or 2^{dly}. the *Promotion* of Piety, or 3^{dly}. the *Good and Benefit of Mankind*: These

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are the things for the effecting of which, we must employ all the *Powers* and *Faculties* of our Souls, and give a loose to our *zealous* and most *vigorous Endeavours*. And 1st. in relation to the *Glory of God*. Whenever we find *that* to be visibly concerned, we must interest our selves in it with *Warmth* and *Vigour*, and lay aside all manner of *Luke-warmness* and *Indifference*. The Benefits which we have received from our Almighty Benefactor, exact the largest Returns of Gratitude imaginable; and we cannot be excused from the Imputation of Unthankfulness, unless they touch us in a very high Degree; these ought to *light* up within our Souls, the lively *Flames* of a devout Acknowledgment; and should oblige us to think nothing too much to be done for him, who has acted so eminently in our Behalf: if therefore at any time, we happen to hear his *Being* controverted, or his *Attributes* aspersed; if we find his *Honour* struck at by the *loose* or *profane*; (as it is but too frequently in this degenerate Age) we must not think we have discharged our Duty, if we only forbear
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to joyn with them in their Impiety ; but must expresse our Loathing and Detestation of it, with a *Zeal* that is *proportionable* to the Obligations we lye under : for how *cold* would the *Amity* of that Man appear, how justly might he be censured as *unfaithful* to his *Friend*, who should hear him abused most grossly and designedly, impeached at once both of Weakness and of Falsity, and yet should listen to these Scandals calmly and unconcernedly, without vindicating his Reputation, or interrupting his Slanderers ? And yet how infinitely more strong are those Ties and Obligations, by which we are engaged to assert *God's Honour*, than the strictest *human Friendship* can lay upon us ? and how unaccountably unreasonable must our Proceedings be, if we only *refuse* to exercise this Duty, where the Inducements to it are *most strong and powerful* ? To hear the *Word* of the *God of Truth* impeached of *Falseness* ; his *Wisdom* and his *Power* of *Folly* and *Insufficiency* ; the *Dispensations* of his *Providence* of *Injustice* and *Irregularity* ; as if they were the *casual Productions* of *Chance* and *Accident* ;

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this (I say) should stir up in us a religious Indignation ; should make us assert his Honour with as much Industry and Eagerness, as the licentious Employ in vilifying and aspersing it ; and when thus the *Glory of God* is *any way* at Stake, we must be *zealously affected in this good thing*. But 2dly. in relation to the *Promotion of Piety*. Whatever tends to the *Advancement* of true Religion, or to the curbing and suppressing of Sin and *Wickedness*, must be forwarded by us with all possible *Earnestness*, with the greatest *Ardour* and *Intention of Mind*. *Virtue* so often clashes with our worldly Interest, and *Vice* is so agreeable to the Depravedness of our Nature ; that it is impossible to promote the *one* or to repell the *other*, whether in *our selves* or in the *rest* of Mankind, with *weak Efforts* and *cold Endeavours* : he that is truly bent to the Attainment of that End, must set about it *heartily*, and contend for it with *Vigour* : he must not think it sufficient to withdraw from the Infection, to deplore in private the universal Corruption, and to offer up some faint and ineffectual good Wishes ; But must

must *stand in the Gap* to oppose it's Progress, must endeavour to *stem* the prevailing *Torrent*; and both by the Majesty of a good Example, and the seasonable Intermixture of Reproofs and Exhortations, must at once *express* the *Zeal* which *actuates himself*, and *attempt to inspire others* with a *proportionable Concernment*: A Mistake in this matter is very pernicious; and to this *luke-warmthness* and *Indifferency* in most Professours, may our general and barefac'd Impiety be in a great Measure ascribed; for even amongst those few, who by the happy Prejudice of a virtuous Education, or by the Strength and Ability of a well-informed Understanding, have secured themselves against the common Licentiousness of the Times; how *much fewer* yet are to be meet with, who think the *publick* Promotion of Piety their Business? Are not most of them contented lazily to sit still, to *hide their Candle under a Bushel*, when they ought to let *their Light shine before Men*, that others *might glorifie their heavenly Father*? Were such as these but earnest and industrious, to recommend the unblamableness

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mableness of their Conversation to the publick Notice and Observance; did they not only take care to *walk upright*, but to do it *in the midst of a crooked Generation*; Vice would soon be put out of Countenance; and the *native Loveliness of Virtue* would certainly prevail, against the *adulterate and sophisticated Beauties* of it's Rival. But when either a Despair of succeeding in their Attempts, or a vicious Apprehension of prejudicing their Interest, or of exposing themselves to the hatred and Derision of the World; when either the number or the Authority of the contrary Party, shall deliver them from opposing what is so powerfully upheld; when they listen to such fatal Discouragements, as are coined by their *Laziness* or their *Fear*; it is no wonder that Sin should still gain Ground amongst us, when it meets with nothing that dares to resist it. If then the *vertuous* Man would have *Piety advanced*, he must be *active* and *industrious* in the *Promotion of it*; he must at least use as much Diligence, to forward that and bring it into Repute; as the wicked does to propagate

gate his Wickedness; he must not be cold and indifferent in the matter, but must be zealously affected in this good thing. But 3dly. in relation to the Benefit of Mankind. Whatever may contribute to the Good of Society, and to the true Interest of our Neighbour, must be practised by us with the greatest Earnestness, with extraordinary Carefulness and Application of Mind. Besides those other Methods formerly laid down, of being jealous for God's Glory, and industrious for the Advancement of Piety, which are the most certain and effectual means, to promote the Benefit and Good of Mankind; there are yet other Ways of compassing this End, in which we must be conversant vigourously and affectionately: Thus when the Necessities of our Brethren call upon us, whether they are publick, such as affect the Community of which we are Members; or whether they are private, being more narrowly restrained to particular Persons; we must be ready to administer our Aid and Assistance, with such a Cheerfulness, as may testify the Sincereness of our Intentions: we must not think it enough, to pray for the
Peace

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Peace and Prosperity of the one, or to say unto the others *be ye warmed and filled*; but must express our Zeal by *imparting* to them both, *such things* as we know to be *needful for them*. If then we see the *publick* safety, about to be closely *undermined*, or likely to be *overturned* by such attempts as are more *open*; if we find our most *holy Religion* to be endangered, and the *Gates of Hell* endeavouring to *prevail against it*; we must not imagine we have done our Duty, if we quietly attend what the Issue will be, without interesting our selves for the Preservation of them both; but must seriously consider that in such a case, *he that is not for them is against them*; and that it is near as culpable to be *neutral and indifferent*, as if we our selves joined to *level them with the Ground*. Again, if the *private Necessities* of any wanting Brother, call loudly upon us for a seasonable Assistance; we must not think that we have discharged our Duty, that we sufficiently consult his Good and Advantage,

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if we are *coldly sensible* of his Extremities, and are only touched with an *unfruitful Compassion*; but it must make upon us such a *lively Impression*, as may dispose us *cheerfully* to *Works of Mercy*, and to the *redressing* these Calamities with which he is oppressed. Thus whether the Occasions which give us opportunity, to *promote the good and benefit of Mankind*, are of a *publick* or a *private* Nature; we must apply our selves to it with our most *heartly Endeavours*, we must be *zealously affected in this good thing*. Having now enquired into the *proper Objects*, upon which our *zealous Affections* must be exercised, which was the first Qualification indispensably necessary, in order to give Value and Perfection to our *Zeal*; I proceed to consider the second Recommendation, which is necessary to set off our being *zealously affected*; and this is *Constancy and Perseverance*: it is good (says the Apostle) *to be zealously affected always*.

Constancy is the Crown of all *Christian* Graces, the chiefest Recommendation

dation of our devout Performances ; from which *alone* they borrow their Value and Esteem, and which *only* can entitle them to a Reward : without *this*, all the religious Exercises in which we may be employed, seem rather to proceed from *Fancy* or from *Whimsy*, than from any *serious* and *settled Resolutions* ; and all the *Expressions* of our *Zeal*, are but so many *irregular Fits of Piety*, occasioned either by our *bodily Constitution*, or the present Influence of *Humour* and *Opinion* ; and having no Foundation more solid than *these*, they are therefore exposed to such frequent *Alterations* : whereas a *stedfast and unmoveable Perseverance* in well-doing, is the result of *firm and unchangeable Principles*, grounded upon *Reason* and supported by *Religion* ; whose *Rules* and *Maximes* being of *perpetual Force*, make *all* the Actions of a *Peace*, *even* and *agreeable* ; at all times conformable to the Will of *God*, in whom is no *variableness* neither *Shadow of turning*. This is that delightful *Harmony* of Actions, that *steddy* and *resolved Temper* of Mind, to which the *Apostle* exhorts us in the words

of my Text, when he bids us be *zealously affected* always. The *Heat* then of our Zeal must not operate by *starts*, like the *unhealthful Returns* of an *intermitting Fever*; but must rather resemble that *vital Warmth*, which keeps the Body in a *lively* and *useful Temperament*, and makes the *Spirits* at all times *vigorous* and *active*; the other is rather a *Disease* than a *Perfection* of the Mind; and he who is *zealous* but *now and then*, is in danger of being so sometimes in the *wrong place*; since he seems not to be guided by any *settled Principle*, but to be acted by the *Dictates* of *Passion* or of *Humour*: This is that *vestal Fire* of the Soul, which is *kintled* from *above*, and burns *perpetually*; whilst the other is like those *deceitful Flames*, that appear to the *benighted Traveller* and disappear by turns, and which only *mislead* him into *Danger* or *Destruction*: The good Man has at all times an *equal Concern* for the *Glory of God*, for the *Promotion of Piety*, and for the *Good of Mankind*, to the *Advancement* of which ends his Zeal is
em-

employed ; and therefore his *Eagerness* and *Industry* for the promotion of them, is *always* enlivened with an *equal Vigour* : To *set out briskly* in the Pursuit of them, and yet to *flag* before his Course be ended, he knows it not the way to *attain the prize* ; and therefore he proceeds with unwearied *Diligence*, and *slackens* not his *speed* till he has *finished his Race* : He knows the Reward of his *Christian Warfare*, will never be gained by *beating the Air* ; and therefore he *so fights as to overcome* ; nor *desists* he from the *Combat*, till he has gained the *Victory* : He is sensible that *Zeal*, however *warmly* it *begins*, will quickly *grow cold* for want of *Use* and *Action* ; and therefore resolves to preserve the *Heat* of it, by *practising* it *constantly*, and keeping it *still* in *Motion* : He that gives way at any time to a *stupid unconcernedness*, when a *just occasion* offers for exercising his *Zeal* ; shall find it gain ground insensibly upon him, and his Affections by degrees grow *remiss* and *languid* ; and therefore if we design to be at *any time hearty*, unless we resolve to give ourselves up to *Coldness* and *Insensibility* ;

we must feed and cherish it by *frequent Practice*, and preserve it in its *Vigour* by *continual Exercise*: It is a tacite Confession that we have been in the *wrong*, when we cease to go *forward* according as we *begun*; it seems as if we had over shot our selves in our former Expressions of *Zeal*, when we suffer them afterwards to be *discontinued*; and therefore, as he who *hotly* pursues an *undeserving Object*, is still the more blamable, the more *earnest* he is, and deserves the black Character of *obstinate* and *incorrigible*; so on the contrary, he whose *vigorous Application* is directed *aright*, can never be *too eager* in the prosecution of it; but his *Zeal* is still enhanced proportionably to his *Perseverance*. It is then another necessary Qualification, of our being *zealously affected*, that we *continue* in it, that we be so *always*. And thus much may suffice for the 2d General, namely to enquire how our *Zeal* must be *qualified*, we must be *zealously affected always*, and *in a good thing*. I proceed to the Consideration of my

3d. General, containing the Character and Commendation of this Duty, that it is good. It is good (says the Text) to be zealously affected, always in a good thing.

The Excellency of this Duty will most eminently appear, by reflecting that Zeal is the *only thing*, which sets a value upon our weak Performances, and which *alone* recommends them to the Favour of our God: Though we run through the whole Course of *Christian Duties*, and be conversant in every Branch of our Obedience, yet will they all be *useless* and *unprofitable*, unless this *active Principle* gives Life to our Actions; and God who more regards the *Application of the Mind*, than any other *Qualification* of our religious Exercises; will pass his Judgment in their Favour or against them, according as *that* is *more* or *less* affected. Do we then believe that there is a God, and do we give credit to whatever he has revealed? thus far indeed we have done well; but this *Faith* will be *useless* and *insignificant*,

unless *Zeal* comes in to give it Life and Vigour; to make us shew our *Faith* by the Exemplariness of our *Actions*; and to settle and confirm it so stedfastly in our Souls, as to make us even dare to die in the Defence of it: without this it will be no better than a bare *historical Assent*, unless *that* applies it *warmly* home to our selves, and makes it operate upon our Hearts *powerfully* and *effectually*: Do we *hope* for those Joys which are prepared for them, who shall qualifie themselves for them by an unblamable Conversation? the Progress thus far is fair and commendable; but unless *Zeal* comes in to quicken and enliven it; unless *that* gives us a sense of those ineffable Delights, and an *Insight* (as it were) into that heavenly *Canaan*; our Endeavours after them would be so *faint* and *languishing*, that we should never attain to the *Recompence* of Reward: *This* gives us so clear and advantageous a Prospect, of that infinite Bliss which shall be one day revealed; that it presses us to turn our *Hopes* into *Assurances*; and never to boggle at the *Difficulties* of the *Way*, since they will all be overballanced

ballanced at our Journey's End : Have we a *Love* and *Charity* towards God, and towards our *Neighbour* ? our Mind is in a good and *Christian* Disposition ; but unless *Zeal* makes them glow with a becoming *Ardour* ; unless that blows up these *Sparks* into a *Flame*, and still administers *fresh Fuel* to them ; they will either soon go out, or else burn so weakly ; as will neither recommend us by their *Fervency* to our God, nor impart *warmth* and comfort to our shivering Brother : Are our *Devotions* frequent and regular ? do our *Morning Prayers* ascend before God as the *Incense*, and is the lifting up of our Hands a constant *Evening Sacrifice* ? We have thus far proceeded towards the discharging of our Duty ; but unless *Zeal* gives a Value to our *Praises* and our *Petitions* ; the former is but a *Victim without a Heart*, and the latter is no better than the *Sacrifice of Fools* ; this it is which gives them that agreeable *Violence*, which God himself is not able to resist, by which the happy violent take Heaven by force : Are our *Fasts* and *Humiliations* strict and mortifying, and have we frequent Returns of *Ab-*
stinence

stinence and Self-denials? Thus far ('tis true) we have performed very well; but unless *Zeal* recommends them to the acceptance of our God, it is no better than the *bowing down of our heads like a Bulrush*; and is only the effect of *Moroseness* or *Hypocrisie*: Thus if we would examine each *several Virtue*, throughout the *whole Catalogue of Christian Graces*, we should find them all to be *empty* and insignificant, to be neither considerable in themselves nor acceptable to God, unless the *Stamp of Zeal* be *impressed* upon them, to *affix* their *Value*, and make them *pass current*. This *zealous Affection* then of the *Mind*, this *eager Intention* of the utmost we can do; is that *alone* which makes our imperfect *Performances*, well pleasing to a *God of infinite Perfection*; and *this*, which advanced the *Widows mite*, above the *plentiful Contributions* of the *wealthy*; will set a price upon our *mean* but *heartly Endeavours*, notwithstanding their natural *Poverty* and *Insufficiency*. These *Considerations* may suffice, to justify the *Character* and *Commendation* which the *Apostle* gives, *that it is good to be zealously affected.*

Thus

Thus have I gone over the three general heads, which I laid down as the Subject of my present Discourse; and I have 1st described to you the *Nature of Zeal*, I have 2^{dly} insisted upon its necessary *Qualifications*, and 3^{dly} I have enquired into its *Usefulness* and *Excellency*. I should now take notice of some dangerous Proceedings, which shroud themselves under this venerable Name: of which some are set on foot by a *blind Zeal* or a *Zeal without Knowledge*, such a one as is directed to some *other end*, than the *Glory of God*, or the *Promotion of true Piety*; others are occasioned by a *furious zeal* or a *zeal without Charity*, which consults not the *Good or Benefit of Mankind*: but I shall not at the present insist upon these; since they may very easily be discovered, by comparing them with that *Zeal*, which is *true and genuine*, and which it has been my business at present to explain. Instead of that, I shall set about the more useful Work, of briefly applying to our selves what has been already said; and so I shall conclude.

You

You have been shewn, that nothing will recommend us to the Favour of our God, but the discharging our Duty with *Zeal* and *Affection*; and I hope you are not insensible of the Misery of their Condition, who have *no pretence* to his *Grace* and *Favour*: how seriously then ought we all to labour, for this *great* and *excellent Qualification* of our Actions, which can *only* entitle them to be accepted by God? Let us not, I beseech you, flatter our selves, or deceive our own Souls in a matter of such moment; *Indifference* in Religion will be so far, from rendering us *well-pleasing* in his sight, that it will only make us *loathsome* and *detested*; and we shall be liable to be censured as the *Laodiceans* were, *because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, therefore will I spew thee out of my mouth.* Let us then set resolutely about this great Work, and endeavour to discharge it as industriously as we ought; let us *fix* our *Affections* upon a *deserving Object*, and then let them *embrace* it with their *utmost Fervency*: let us not *pretend* a *Zeal* for the *Glory of God*,
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when we are only attending to some *secular Advantages*; let us not pretend a *Zeal* for the *Promotion* of *Piety*, when we only aim at the *Advancement* of a *Party* or a *Faction*; let us not pretend a *Zeal* for the good of *Man-kind*, when we are not only consulting our *private Interest*: but let our *Intentions* first be guided by *Sincerity*, and afterwards exhorted with *Ardour* and *Alacrity*: and having once well entered upon this Province, let us never draw back or shamefully retreat; but let us always continue in the Exercise of our Duty, with an unalterable *Constancy* and *Perseverance*; let not our case be like that of *Jehu*, who said, come with me and see my zeal for the Lord, when he destroyed *Baal* out of *Israel*; but suffered it soon after to grow cold and ineffectual, when he should have departed from the Sins of *Jereboam*: But let all our *Actions* be of one tenour, let our *Zeal* and *Affection* be continually employed; since the admirable *Contexture* of *Godliness* is such, that he who makes a flaw in part unravels the whole.

God

God will then accept of the *Heartiness* of our Endeavours, and will assist us with his grace to go on to *Perfection*, he will reward our *Zeal* with his *Protection* here, and crown it with *everlasting Happiness* hereafter; convincing us by the surest and the happiest Experience, that this is an Accomplishment the most *eminent* of any or in the Words of my Text, that *is is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.*

Which that we may all be, and consequently be happy, God grant unto us of his infinite Mercy, through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ. To whom with the Father and holy Spirit, be ascribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. *Amen.*

*Isaiah the 57th. Chap. and
last Verse.*

*There is no Peace saith
my God to the wicked.*

IF Men will first dress up *Religion* as a *Bug-bear*, and then tremble at the *frightfulness* of its Appearance; if they will *paint Vice* and set it off with *borrowed Ornaments*; and then (like the *doating Artist*) grow enamoured of the *Image* which themselves have made; if they will thus take up with *out-sides* and *appearances*, and let their Judgments only play upon the *Surface* of things; it is no great wonder that so few should be *affected*, with the *real* and *substantial Beauties* of *Piety* and *Vertue*; so few scar'd at
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the *natural Uglinefs* and *Deformity* of *Sin* and *Wickednefs*: But if we would act fuitably to that *reason* which God has given us, if we would endeavour to look into the *Nature* of things, and to distinguish between *ſhew* and *ſubſtance*; we ſhould find on the one ſide all the ſeeming *Uneaſineſſes* of *Ver- tue* to diſappear, and to be happily ſucceeded by *Peace* and *Satisfaction*, by whatever may ſerve to engage the *Affections*, or entertain the *Underſtand- ing*; we ſhould perceive on the other- ſide, all the *ſuperficial Gayeties* of *Sin* to drop off, and to leave nothing elſe behind them, but *Anguiſh* of *Mind* and *Confuſion* of *Face*, a *wounded Con- ſcience*, and the *Terrours* of the *Lord*. For however the wicked Man may pretend to *Serenity*, however he may put on an *outward Appearance* of *Tran- quility*; yet does he but cry *Peace, Peace*, where no *Peace* is; ſince we are poſitive- ly aſſured by a *divine Authority*, that he has no *Title* to it, nor *Accquaint- ance* with it, *There is no Peace ſaith my God to the wicked.*

In my following Discourse, upon which words I shall endeavour to illustrate this assertion of the Prophet, *That there is no peace to the wicked*, by these three following Considerations.

1st. That the wicked Man is at Enmity within himself.

2^{dly}. That he is at Enmity with all Men else.

3^{dly}. That he is at Enmity with God.

From all which Considerations it will evidently appear, that whether we consider him in relation to God, his Neighbour or himself, (and we cannot possibly conceive him under any other Circumstances) *there is no peace to the wicked*.

1st. Then *there is no peace to the wicked*, because the wicked Man is at Enmity within himself.

Of all sorts of War, a *civil* or *intestine* one is most pernicious and destructive; it is generally carryed on with the greatest Violence and Animosity, and the Effects which flow from it, are the most fatal and the most lasting; by being waged within our own Territories, it makes us liable, not only to the Inconveniences which accompany it, but to those that follow it a greater Distance; to a long train of Miseries which constantly attend it; and to the wasting of the Country wherein we fight: yet in *this kind of Warfare*, however dreadful or detestable, is the wicked Man continually exercised: His Bosom is a common Field of Battle, where various Interests are struggling with one another; every *Appetite* endeavouring at its own Advancement and Gratification; and in order to that end, not only combating with *Reason* and with *Conscience*, but with such *other Appetites*, as thwart and contradict it: *Luxury* and *Voluptuousness* must sometimes be kept under, to carry on the Ends of *Avarice* and *Ambition*; sometimes *Con-*
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vetousness must be fetter'd up, that provision may be made for the *flesh* to fulfil the *lusts* thereof; now *Anger* must be subdued, and *Malice* curbed, to promote some Designs of *Interest* and *Advantage*; another time our *darling Interest* must be sacrificed, in order to satisfy *Revenge* or *Indignation*: Thus is the wicked Man at variance *within himself*, divided into several Parties and factious Combinations; and is always a looser let whatsoever side prevail, since it is a *part of himself* that is still subdued: And in this wild State of *Anarchy* and *Confusion*, where all would govern, and no one obey; there can be no Appearance of *Peace* and *Quietness*, but an uninterrupted Scene of *Tumults* and *Combustions*, if *Reason* or *Conscience* take Advantage of these Divisions, and begin to assert their lawful *Jurisdiction*; how soon do these *contending Enemies*, unite against them, (like *Herod* and *Pilate* against our Saviour,) and with joyn't forces oppose their *common Adversaries*; and then (as the *Apostle* describes the Warfare) *the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusteth against*

the Flesh; every *Thought* and *Imagination* is quarrelled with and opposed, by the differing *Suggestions* of a contrary Principle: Each *pious Motion* and *good Intention* on the one side, is batter'd and assaulted by *evil Surmises* and *wicked Contrivances*; each *impious Device* and *unjust Design* on the other side, is baffled and exposed by the *Convictions of Conscience*, and the *Forces of right Reason*: thus is the *Breast of a wicked Man* like the *troubled Sea* which cannot rest, continually casting up *Mire and Dirt*, and differently agitated by *Winds and Tydes*; and if ever it admits of a seeming *Calme*, that it self is more dangerous, than the *loudest Tempest*: for if *Passion* runs loose like a *Horse* that has cast its *Rider*, and the *Beast* within us has got the better of the *Man*; if *Conscience* be lulled asleep, and *right Reason* be deposed; if one ceases to *dictate*, and the other to *accuse*; if thereby their *loud Clamours* are silenced and appeased, and a seeming sort of quiet for some time introduced; yet would it be as improper to give the name of *Peace* to this *dull Security*, as that of *Rest* to a *stupifying Lethargy*:
for

for how can that Man be said to be at *Peace*, who labours under the heaviest *Callamities*, that the *worst Event* of *War* could bring upon him? All his *Friends* and *Well wishers* are *defeated* and *subdued*; and he himself lies *bound* and *fettered*, under the *Dominion* of his most implacable *Enemies*. But the most melancholly part of the Prospect is yet behind, and that is, when *Conscience* which was lulled *asleep* shall *awaken*, when it shall *break its Chains* like *Sampsons Cords*, and *rouze it self* as a *Giant refreshed with Wine*; when this *Worm which never dyes* shall begin its perpetual *Gnawings*, and wound the Soul in its most sensible part; what *Horror* and what *Anguish* shall it then be seized with! and how dismal a state of *inward Ennity*, must it be engaged in then! when that holds a *Glass* to him which will not *flatter*, and shews him his *Transgressions* in their ugliest *Shapes*; what *Terrour* and *Confusion* shall then possess him! for can any thing be more miserable than to loath and detest ones self, to hate ones own self with perfect hatred, and to want the meanest *Satisfaction*

that Self-love inspires! how irksome and tedious must his Condition be, who dares not converse with his own Thoughts; who is afraid to keep himself company; or to have any Communication with his own Heart: whether shall he flee for Ease and Satisfaction, who carries his Tormenter about with him wheresoever he goes; and is at once against himself, *Accuser, Judge, and Executioner*. What Peace then or *Tranquility* of mind can that Man enjoy, who sees nothing at home, but what either *frightens* him or *disgusts* him? who is convinced of the *Baseness* and of the *Danger* of his Actions; and yet is hurried on to the Commission of those things, which he cannot but *condemn* in the *acting*, and *tremble* for in the *Consequences*? who *views* the *Precipice*, and yet cannot avoid *leaping* down into it? who sees himself *falling* headlong into *everlasting Destruction*, and yet has not the power to *stop* or to *restrain* himself? a Reflection of this Nature is so very dismal, that were the wicked Man liable to no other Inconveniences, it were a sufficient Evidence of the Misery of his

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his Condition, in being thus at *Enmity with his own Soul*; and does abundantly convince us, that if we consider him in relation to *himself*, there is no peace to the wicked.

But as the wicked Man is thus at *Enmity within himself*, either by the warring of his *Affections* against the Dictates of *right Reason*, or by their violent *strugglings* one against another, or by bearing the *Lashes* of his awakened *Conscience*: So

zaly. *There is no peace to the wicked, because the wicked Man is at Enmity with all Men else.*

It is an ancient and undoubted *Maxime*, that there is no *Friendship* amongst *evil Men*; and *this* we know is the *Foundation of Peace*, without which it can neither be established nor upheld: for the wicked Man being wholly addicted to the pleasing of himself; and being narrowly confined within the private Limits of *Self-love* and *Self-interest*; has no farther respect to the *Advantages* of *Society*,

or the *good* of *others*, than as they are subservient to his *own* *Designes*; as they advance *his* *Pleasure* or *his* *Profit*: To the *good* and *virtuous*, he is an open, avowed and professed *Enemy*; since there can be no ground for *Friendship* or for *Commerce*, between Persons whose interests are so opposite and contradictory! for *what concord is there betwixt Christ and Belial*? or *what Communion has light with darkness*? he looks upon every *Action* of the *righteous* Man, as somewhat that upbraids or exposes him; and is so far from being wrought upon by the Power of *good Example*, that he hates and detests the very Man that gives it, for not being infected with the Contagion of *his ill one*: he thinks the *righteous* so many *outward Consciences*, which incessantly *reproach* him; telling him by their *Example* what he ought to do, and silently accusing him for not doing accordingly: As for those who are of the *same corrupt* leven with himself, the *Conformity* of their *Inclinations* is so far from being a Bond of *Peace* and *Amity*, that it does but sett them at a *greater distance*; for they are all *passionate*

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onate *Rivals*, in the Chase and Pursuit of one common *Mistress*, of worldly Honour, or Pleasure, or Interest; and impatient of the *Prétentions* of any but themselves? The *ambitious* Man, whose unbounded Appetite grasps all Preferments and Advantages, and thinks them all too little for himself; hates him who is acted by the same principle, whose Desires are levelled at the same mark, and who consequently must thwart him in some of his Pretensions: The *voluptuous Epicure*, who beleives that Nature can never provide, too great a variety of sensual Pleasures, to answer the Extravagancy of his inordinate Appetites; would if it were possible, monopolize all that she has allowed, and takes him for his utter Enemy, that shall pretend to engross any part of them: The *covetuous Wretch*, whose greedy Avarice, the Wealth of both *Indies* would be too poor to satisfy; looks upon his neighbouring *Miscr*, as a Thief and a Robber, in hoarding up those Treasures from him, which his eager Desires had swallowed for his own: Thus every particular Sinner, considers those
of

of the *same Rank*, as *joint Pretenders* to the *same beloved Object*, as opposers of the *Enjoyment* at which he aims; and therefore looks upon them with an *Eye of Jealousie*, and consequently of *Hatred*. If there is any thing to be found amongst them, that has the *Appearance of Peace and Friendship*; it is but *Self-love* a little varied, and a *Delight* they take in the *Resemblance of themselves*: for wherever *this* is wanting, the *Rupture* is most palpable; the *prodigal Fool* despising the *covetous*, as a *miserable Muckworm*; and he again censuring the *prodigal*, as an *extravagant Mad-man*; the *ambitious* deriding the *Libertine*, as an *effeminate Triffler*; and he again contemning the *ambitious*, as a *Drudge of State and Slave to Business*: Thus whether their *Desires* be *different* or *agreeing*, whether they go the *same* or *contrary Ways*; they either *juggle* those with whom they *walk*, or *despise* and *abhor* those from whom they *separate*; they are at *Enmity and Variance with all Men else*; and therefore if we consider them in relation to others, *there is no peace to the wicked*.

But

But as the wicked Man is at *Enmity within himself*, by those *Tumults* and *Combustions* that *inwardly distract* him; and as he is at *Enmity with all Men else*, whether *vertuous* or *otherwise*, whether addicted to the *same* or to *different* Transgressions: So

3dly. *There is no peace to the wicked, because the wicked Man is at Enmity with God.*

The greatest and most infallible Instance of *Enmity*, is when we enter into a tender and intimate *Alliance*, with the professed *Enemies* of any other Party; It is the espousing an Interest directly opposite, and an open renouncing of all former Affinity. Now in this dismal state of *Enmity* against *Almighty God*, is the wicked Man avowedly Engaged: the first and greatest *Enemy* of God is the *Devil*, and the wicked Man is entred into a perfect Covenant with him: he fights his Battles, promotes his Designs, and goes into the Lists with him against God and Goodness; the League which
he

he makes with him is the strictest that can be; he espouses and enters into all his Interests, and is as warmly concerned for them, as for his own; all his Studies and Endeavours, are industriously bent, to the Advancement and Enlargement of his Dominions; to make his power both absolute and universal, and to *exalt his name above whatsoever is called God.*

A 2d. Enemy of God, is the *World*; and therefore the *Apostle* positively assures us, *that the friendship of this world is Enmity with God*; but how dear and tender a Correspondence is there between *this* and the wicked Man? he has no Thoughts, no Wishes, that look beyond the Enjoyment of it; all his Hopes and his Desires are terminated there; they are so firmly joyned, as if he grew to it; he is willing to renounce all his Pretensions to another *World*, if he may but enjoy an undisturbed Portion of the things of *this*; take away any of them, and you tear a limb from him; the league in which they are united being so strict and intimate, that he
seems

seems rather to be one *piece* with it, than only a *Friend* or *Companion* of it.

A 3d. *Enemy* of God is the *Flesh*; I see (says the Apostle) another *Law* in my *Members* warring against the *Law* of my *Mind*; now this *Law* of his *Mind* was the *Law* of God; and therefore those *Members* whose *Law* warred against it, must necessarily be the *Enemies* of God: But how very close and friendly an *Affinity*, is there between the *Flesh* and the wicked Man! This is his *bosom Inmate*, his *darling Ally*, that has grown up with him from his *Cradle*, and stuck to him in all his *Fortunes*; this is that *Favourite*, that *beloved One*; for whose dear sake and pleasing entertainment, he entred into all other *Engagements* and *Alliances*; if he is at agreement with *Hell* and the *Devil*, it is but that he may better gratifie the *Flesh*; if he has contracted a *Friendship* with *this World*, it is but that the *Flesh* may be the more plentifully supplied; this is the most powerful *Instrument* of his *Enmity* with God; for the *Advancement* of whole

whose Delight and Satisfaction; he is not afraid to be at odds with Heaven, and so stand in open Defiance against the *Almighty*. These then are the *three Auxiliaries* and *Confederates*, by whose Assistance and Encouragement, the wicked Man is confidently prepared to fight *the armies of the living God*. But (alas) how unequal is the *Combat* like to prove, and how dreadful must the Issue be of such *Hostility*? if they are pronounced *miserable* and *unhappy*, who are barely *without God in this World*; how *sad* and *deplorable* must their Condition be, who have *God against them* both in *this World*, and *that which is to come*? what shall the state of the wicked Man be in that *great and terrible Day of the Lord*; and how dreadful will the Consequences of his *Enmity* be then! when because he was not at peace with the *Lord his Maker*, who stretched forth *the Heavens*, and laid the foundations of *the earth*; he shall receive at the hand of the *Lord* the *Cup of his Fury*, even the *Dreggs of the Cup of trembling*, and wring them out: *Utter Darkness*, the *Never-dying-worm* and *Fire unquenchable*,

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quenchable, do but faintly shadow forth the *unexpressible Torments* of that dismal State. To have the *cursed Spirits* continually torturing and insulting; the *Conscience* and *Fellow-Sinners* perpetually upbraiding; the *Rivers of Brimstone* eternally surrounding; and the *Breath* of an *incensed God*, still fanning of the *Flames*! to be always racked with *Envy* and with *Anger* with *Malice* and *Dispair*; and to have a *sting within one*, more *sharp* and *pungent*, than all *outward Infiictions*, however insupportable! to be the *Objects* of *divine Vengeance* without any *Interposition* of *Mercy* and *Compassion*! and to bear all that infinite *Power* or *Justice* can inflict! to be *renewed* for *Pain*, and only *last* to be *tormented*! to be *always-dying*, and yet *never-dead*! to be constantly in the *Pangs* and *Agonies* of *Death*, and yet never come to a *final Dissolution*! In a word, to be destitute of *Hope*, the only *Succour* of the *miserable*, and to have no prospect of any *End*, either of *ones self*, or of *ones Sufferings*! O consider this all ye that are at *Enmity with God*, lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you!

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yet this must be the Condition of the wicked Man; he has entred into Covenant with the professed and avowed *Enemies* of God; and has thereby declared himself to be at *Enmity* with him, and exposed himself to the Miseries which attend such *Enmity*; and therefore if we consider him in relation to God, *there is no peace to the wicked.*

Thus have you seen the miserable *Welfare* to which the wicked Man is exposed; being at *Enmity* within himself, by the warring of his Lusts against one another; by their violent contending against right Reason; and by the smarting stripes of accusing Conscience: being at *Enmity* with all Men else, by his Hatred and Aversion to the good and vertuous; and his Jealousy and Suspicion of his Fellow-sinners: being at *Enmity* with Almighty God; by his obstinate Defiance of him; and his avowed Friendship with his inveterate Enemies: Thus whethersoever he directs his Sight, he views nothing but Tumults and

and Disorders, Horroze and Confusion:
There is no peace saith my God to the
wicked.

But as we are thus assured by a
divine Authority, that there is no peace
to the wicked; so we may happily infer
from thence, by the great and unde-
niable Rule of contraries, that there is
nothing else but peace to the righteous.
The Fruits of the Spirit, says the A-
postle, are Love, Joy, Peace; a Blessing,
this most eminently valuable; since
it is to the Soul, what Health is it to
the Body; the salt and seasoning of all
other Satisfactions, without which they
loose their relish and become insipid:
Of this the righteous Man is possessed
in a most eminent Degree, and finds
by the surest and the happiest Ex-
perience, that the ways of Piety are
ways of Pleasantness, and that all his
Paths are Peace.

For the clearer Proof of which As-
sertion; let us examine the righteous
Mans Condition, under those several
Circumstances, in which we lately

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considered the *wicked Man*; and we shall certainly be convinced, That

1st. The righteous Man is *at peace within himself*.

2^{dly}. He is *at peace with all Men else*,

3^{dly}. He is *at peace with God*.

1st. Then *there is nothing else but peace to the righteous*, because the righteous Man is *at peace within himself*.

The Righteous (says the royal Psalmist) shall delight themselves in the abundance of Peace; that is, the righteous Mans Tranquility shall be great, and the Delight he takes in it, shall be proportionable: His Mind is always in a perfect Calm; there are no sudden Gusts of Passion to ruffle and discompose it; no factious Engagements of contending Lusts; no rude Assaults upon Conscience and right Reason; to disturb the settled Quiet of the place, and to introduce Disorders and Confusions;

fusions : All things go on evenly there in their constant current ; *Reason* presides, *Conscience* dictates ; and those tumultuous and unruly *Appetites*, which would invade the *publick Peace*, are *fettered* and *disarmed*, and kept within the bounds of *Duty* and *Obedience* : There are no loose Attempts to *depose* the *commanding* Faculties ; but the *superiour Powers* rule *easily*, and the *inferiour Ones* obey *willingly* : there are no secret *Lashes*, no *soreness*s or *festerings* of *inward Wounds* ; but his *rejoycing* is this, the *Testimony* of his *Conscience*, a modest Sense of his own *Innocency*, a firm *Perswasion* of *God's Favour* and *Protection*, and a happy *Experience* of the *Refreshments* of his *Spirit* : Let the whole *World* about him be in *uproars* and *distractions*, it is but *retiring within himself*, and he is beyond the reach of all *outward Inconveniences* ; being always provided of an *inward Comforter*, that speaks *peace* to his *Soul* and *healing* to his *Bowels* : These are the *private Entertainments* of the *righteous Man* ; and they abundantly *verifie* the *Prophets* prediction, that the work of *righteousness*

righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever.

But as the righteous Man is thus at peace within himself; by the regular Management of his *Passions* and *Affections*; by the just *Authority* of unprejudiced *Reason*; and by the sweet *Influences* of *Gods Spirit*, and a *Conscience void of offence*. So

2dly. There is nothing else but peace to the righteous, because the righteous Man is at peace with all Men else.

The two great Duties of *Humility* and *Charity*, in the practice of which, the righteous Man is continually conversant, are the surest and most infallible Methods, for attaining to and preserving an *outward Tranquility*; the former of these hinders him from being *injurious* to others, and the latter disarms his *Resentments* when others are so to him; the one inspires him with a mean Opinion of himself, the other teaches him to think well of all men else; this makes him careful to pay a due Respect
abroad,

abroad, that hinders him from repining when it is not repayed at home; and both together make up that peaceful and amicable Temper, which will neither suffer a Man to give nor to take Offence: the righteous are as dear to him as his own Soul; they take sweet Counsel together (as the royal Psalmist expresses it) and go into the house of God as Friends: the wicked are so far from being the objects of his hatred, that he industriously endeavours to promote their Good; and forwards their Conversion with Zeal and Diligence. Though no Man has a greater loathing against Sin, yet none can have a more real Concern for the Sinner; he knows how to distinguish between the Man and his Vices, and can be sorry for the one, while he detests the other: God he is sure, hates nothing that he hath made; and he cannot but love where God affects; and copy out that divine Original: he has no private Ends to satistie, no narrow Interests of his own to carry on, but his Designs are directed to the general good of mankind, and his Affection is as large, as his Design is universal. He is

not jealous of being *outstripped*, by those that *run with him the race of Godliness*; since he is assured that the *Joy of their Lord* will be sufficient for them all: Nor can he *hate* such as go the *broad way that leads to Destruction*; since he knows their *Condition* to be *miserable enough* without it, and that they are fitter *Objects of his pity* than his *enmity*: thus is he free from all *Bitterness* whatsoever; and in the quiet *Rest of the upright Man, Righteousness and Peace do kiss each other.*

But as the *righteous Man* is thus at *peace within himself*, and *with all Men else* whether *vertuous or wicked.* So

3dly. *There is nothing else but peace to the righteous*, because the *righteous Man* is at *peace with God*. This is the *Perfection and Consummation of his Happiness*, that which makes his *peace* lasting and unalterable, that the *God of peace* is in firm league with him: how *quiet and serene* must his *Breast* be, when upon a due and strict *Examination*, he finds a full and exact
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Conformity (as far as human *Infirmity* can advance towards perfection,) between *his* Will, and the *Will of God*! when he feels no rebellious Thoughts or Inclinations, fighting against God, or impiously contending with his Blessed Spirit! but a perfect Resignation to his holy Pleasure, and an intire Obedience to the divine Prescriptions! when he joyfully perceives, that he has settled no *Commerce* or *Correspondence* with the *Enemies* of God! he has made no *Leagues* that are contrary to his *Covenant* with him! that the *three grand Adversaries* of God and Goodness, could never draw him into their *Association*, or betray him into a *Confederacy*, so fatal and destructive! how will he then applaud *himself*, (or rather the *Grace of God which works within him*,) for having *eluded* and *defeated* all the *Wiles* and *Attempts*, of those *insinuating* and *potent Enemies*! and how wonderful a Satisfaction must he entertain, to find his *agreement with God*, kept perfect and unbroken! to see himself in that blessed Condition, as to have a Right and Title to the divine Favour; to the inward refresh-

ing of his comfortable Spirit, to his Defence and Protection in his outward Concernments, and to the eternal Fruition of him hereafter! when he shall *here* be entertained with the happy Prospect, of *that Joy which shall be one day revealed*; such Joy as Sense cannot relish, nor *Imagination* figure; which Eye hath not seen nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of Man fully to conceive! to feed upon the Hopes of everlasting Happiness, and the joyfull Assurance of a blessed Immortality; To be the Heir and Proprietor of ineffable Delights, and utterable Ravishments of the Soul; to be naturalized and admitted into the heavenly Canaan, and made free Denison of the *new Jerusalem*; where he shall have the agreeable Society of just Men made perfect, and the blessed Conversation and Fellowship of Angels; the presence of God, in which is fullness of joy; and a place upon his right hand, where pleasures are for evermore! In a word, where he shall enjoy God who is all in all, and enjoying him, shall enjoy all things with him!

him! yet thus shall God speak Comfort unto the Hearts of the righteous, and shall reveale unto them the abundance of peace.

And now let us look back a little, and take a short View of the righteous Mans Condition, how happily it differs from that of the wicked Man; he is at peace within himself, having no inward Disturbances by unruly Passions; no Usurpations upon the rights of Reason; no anguish of Soul, or terrours of Conscience: *he is at peace with all Men else*; being firmly united in the Bonds of Amity with the good and vertuous; and having a Tendernefs and Compassion for such as are otherwise: He is at peace with Almighty God; being cherished with his smiles, and assured of his Favour; *he tastes and sees how good the Lord is*, and feels that peace of God which passes all Understanding: Thus is he surrounded with Quietness and Serenity, and there is nothing else, but peace to the righteous.

And

And now, God forbid, that any who are here present; should be like those of whom the *royal Psalmist* complains, *that while he talked to them of peace, they made themselves ready for the Battle*; God forbid, that while I am thus recommending to you, this *Quiet and Tranquility*, you should prepare to enter into the contrary Party of *Enmity and Hostility*. A State of *Warfare* is not to be coveted; we have had too near a prospect of its Inconveniences, to think it a matter of Delight or Satisfaction: and yet all *these Wars and rumours of Wars*, have nothing in them so terrible and frightfull, as *that State of Enmity* of which I have been discoursing: In all these we cannot but have *some Friends* to trust to, we are in perfect *Amity and Alliance* with our selves, and we chearfully hope for *Gods Assistance*: but in the *other* you have been already shewn, that we have *no Friends*, but such as pretend to be so, that they may prove the *greater Enemies*; we are at *utter Enmity* with

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with our own Souls; and have God himself for our Adversary: we have not the least Interval of Peace and Quietness; there is no peace saith my God to the wicked. Now to God the Father, &c.

Psalm

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the least Interval of Peace and Quiet
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show to God the Father

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*Psalm the 31st. the 33^d.
and 34th Verses.*

33 *O love the Lord, all ye his
Saints ; for the Lord preserveth
the faithful, and plentifully re-
wardeth the proud Doer.*

34. *Be of good courage, and he
shall strengthen your hearts, all
ye that hope in the Lord.*

THat God has still continued to
be gracious to our Israel,
that his Providence has so
constantly watched over us for
good ; can only be resolved without the
highest Presumption, into one or both of
the following Reasons : either into the
Long-suffering and Mercy of our God,
who

who has not been *extream* to mark our misdoings, but has endeavoured by his goodness to lead us to repentance; or into that regard which he vouchsafes to have, for the Prayers and Supplications of some devout Petitioners; who have stood in the gap, arrested his Judgments, and wrestled till they prevailed with him to leave a Blessing behind him. For if we reflect, upon that universal Debauchery and Profaness, which in despite of the great Advantages we enjoy, of having the Gospel professed amongst us in it's Purity, our Churches kept open and the Word freely preached, and notwithstanding the care of the Government to the contrary; over-flows like a deluge all Degrees and Conditions; we must confess with Shame and Confusion of Face, that the generality of us deserve no better a Character, than what the Prophet *Isaiah* gives of his rebellious Countrymen; *Ah sinful Nation, laden with Iniquity! a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters! they have forsaken the Lord their God, and provoked the holy one of Israel to anger!* And therefore, though we ought all to be sensibly

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bly, affected, with those repeated Instances which we have had of the divine Protection; yet we must not flatter our selves that we are justly entitled to them, or can challenge the Continuance of them by any right of Merit: The *Long-suffering of God* may be *wearied out* by us, and his *abused Mercy* may be turned into *Displeasure*; or he may take away from the midst of us our *prevailing Intercessours*, and snatch them from *the Evil* which he determines against us; and either way we may be left naked and defenceless, to that Vengeance which is due to the full *Measure of our Iniquities*: The only certain Method by which we may be secured, against the dangers which do now or shall at any time alarm us, is by a thorough Reformation to qualify our selves, for a rational dependance upon the Protection of our God; to be conversant in such things as may recommend us to his Favour; to make *him* first the *Object* of our *Affections* and *Desires*, and afterwards the *Foundation* of our *Hopes* and *Expectations*. This is the Advice which the *Psalmist* gives us in my Text, and which he grounds

grounds upon very weighty and important Considerations; *O love the Lord* (says he) *all ye his Saints; for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud Doer: Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.*

These words consist of two distinct Branches, whose several Members have a very great Agreement with one another, and visibly tend to much the same purpose; and therefore the Doctrine couched under both of them, will shew it self more easily and familiarly; if by a different position of the same Expressions, we reduce the Sense of them into *one large Proposition*: and then it will lye before us after this manner. *O all ye Saints of the Lord, ye that hope in him, love the Lord, and be of good courage; for God will preserve the faithful, and strengthen their heart, but will plentifully reward the proud Doer.*

The Text, thus explained, affords us three things, which may usefully employ our devout Meditations.

1st. The

1st. The *Persons* to whom the *Psalmist* addresses his Exhortation; and they are the *Saints of the Lord*, such as hope in him.

2^{dly}. The *subject Matter* or Substance of the Exhortation it self; that they should love the Lord, and be of good courage.

3^{dly}. The *Argument* which he makes use of to enforce his Exhortation; Because God will preserve the faithful, and strengthen their heart, but will plentifully reward the proud Doer.

1st. Then, let us consider the *Persons* to whom the *Psalmist* addresses his Exhortation; and they are the *Saints of the Lord*, such as hope in him.

Men must be supposed to have some Sense of Religion, to be in a tollerable Frame and Disposition of Mind; before serious Advice can have a good Effect upon them, or make any advantagious Impression upon their

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Souls:

Souls: But where Piety has softned and melted down the heart, and removed it's original Hardness and Inflexibility; there holy Admonitions will find a quick and easie Entrance, and the good Seed that is sown will take root and bring forth fruit: And therefore we find that the Royal Psalmist, whenever he applies himself in his propheticall Office, to those Sons of Belial whose mouth talketh Vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of Iniquity; he does not do it by way of Advice or Exhortation, for that were to throw his pearls before Swine; but denounces against them the heavy Judgments of God, as ready to overwhelm such incorrigible Offenders: But when he would raise hopes of a favourable Event, of Protection under Calamities, or Deliverance out of them, he then addresses to Persons of a quite different Character; such as he knows will receive his Message with a becoming Respect, and qualifie themselves for the reception of those Blessings which he promises. These he here styles by a double Title; in the former Verse he calls them the *Saints of the Lord*, and

and in the latter *those that hope in him*; the first Character has respect to the Obedience which they pay, and the last has regard to the Faith which they exercise: For to be *Saints of the Lord*, is to copy out his Purity, to avoid all *uncleanness both of Flesh and Spirit*, to remove from us all *Filthiness and Superfluity of Naughtiness*, and to perfect *Holiness in the Fear of God*; And to *hope in the Lord*, is to believe he will defend us, to rely upon him in all dangers for Succour and Assistance, to be free from all Anxiety and cast our care upon him, as being convinced that *he careth for us*. They therefore who would entertain a well-grounded Assurance, of being thus the happy Objects of God's Mercy and Indulgence; they who would thus interpret to their own Advantage, any gracious Declarations of the divine Protection; can by no way recommend themselves more successfully to his Favour, than by commendably employing themselves in these two great Duties; paying a just Respect to his Authority in commanding, and relying upon his Power and his Goodness

in *preserving*. Not that it is expected in this State of Imperfection, that our Saintship should consist in an *entire* Holiness, without any the least mixture of Weakness and Infirmary; nor that our *confidence in God* should be so *immovable*, as not sometimes to give way to humane Apprehensions, caused by an uncomfortable Prospect of Affairs; such an *unspotted Purity*, such an *uninterrupted Reliance*, can never be attained to in this life; and the *Psalmist* might complain in relation to the *former*, that *there is none that doeth good, no not one*; and might also affirm in relation to the *latter*, that *the faithful fail from among the children of Men*: But that which is indispensably required at our hands; is a *constant Endeavour* to arrive at *true holiness*, and a *dependance in general* upon the *providence of God*; and the more we improve our selves in both these particulars, the more are we concerned in the *Prophets* Exhortation: For with such as these he may probably prevail, to quicken their Endeavours and exert such Graces; as may be most likely under calamitous Circumstances, either

either to avert Judgements or to draw down Blessings; because *they* will look upon him as the *Embassadour of Heaven*, and will listen to what he delivers under that *awful Character*; whereas *others* who *have not God in all their thoughts*, who have no reverence for *him* nor regard for his *Messenger*; will be apt to interrupt him, as the *Stoicks* did *St. Paul*; with this slighting Question, *what does this Babler say?* Such was the Success which *Noah* met with, a *Preacher of Righteousness* to the old World; such was the effect which *Lot's* advice had, upon his Sons-in-law and Daughters-in-law that dwelt in *Sodom*: the former was despised by his heedless Auditors, *till the Flood came and swept them all away*; and the latter appeared unto them as *one that mocked*, till they were miserably destroyed with *Fire from Heaven*: Thus do these sort of people frustrate all the Endeavours, which can possibly be made use of for their Safety and Security; and therefore it is in vain for the *Prophet* of the Lord, to apply himself to *them* upon any such occasion: They

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never have attempted to resemble themselves by *Holiness*, to him who styles himself the *Lord our Righteousness*; nor accustomed themselves to fix their *dependance* upon him, who is truly called the *rock of Israel* for ever; and therefore they are incapacitated to receive any Advantage, from the advice which is here given to *his Saints that hope in him*; that they should settle their *Affections*, and repose their *Confidence*, upon him who is both *able* and *willing* to defend them, And this leads me to the Consideration of my

2d. Particular, which contains the *subject Matter* or *Substance* of the *Prophets* Exhortation, that *we shou'd love the Lord* and be of good courage. O ye *Saints of the Lord*, ye that hope in him, love ye the Lord, and be of good courage.

The two eminent Virtues to which the *Psalmist* exhorts us, are naturally grounded upon the *double Qualification*, which he supposes to be in those to whom he directs his Exhortation; the

the love of God is a necessary Effect, of that Holiness and Devotion which is in the Lords Saints; and to be of good courage is an infallible Consequence, of relying upon God or hoping in him: For as by a devout Intercourse between God and our Souls, we discover in him daily fresh Perfections, which cannot but encrease our Love and Admiration, and enhance our Affection of so adorable an Object: So by putting our trust in him and being sensible of this Faithfulness, which never fails those who repose themselves upon it; we learn to look down upon all dangers that beset us, and to be of good courage in the most hazardous Circumstances. Give me leave separately to examine these two Duties, of divine Love, and Christian Fortitude; and to shew after what manner they should be discharged by us; if we desire to approve ourselves the Saints of the Lord, and such as have our hope in him; or design to qualify our selves for the happy Consequences, which will certainly attend a due practice of them. And

1st. As to *divine Love*; O love the Lord all ye his Saints.

This most exalted Branch of *Christian Charity*, is a Subject too large to be fully handled, in a small partition of a single Discourse; and therefore I shall only draw some faint *Sketches* of it, by which we may guess at the *Lineaments* of the whole; in assigning to it these four following Qualifications.

1st. Our *Love of God* must be so entire; as not to suffer the *Love* of any thing else, to stand in *competition* with him or *rival* him in our Affections. It is in relation to this very matter, that God is so often stiled a *jealous God*; because he will accept of no *Copartnership*, but will have the *sole* and *absolute* Possession of our Hearts: as no *other Object* can pretend, so powerfully to attract our *Admiration* and *Desire*, because no other can *possess* such unimitable *Perfections*; so will he not allow that *any thing* be admitted, by *sharing* with him to cool and lessen that

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Affection, to whose *utmost Ardency* he is so justly entitled. All *other good things* which he vouchsafes to impart to us, may have a *due proportion* of our *Love and Esteem*, in a *becoming Subordination* to him and *his Interests*; but even the *nearest claims* of *Blood and Nature*, must loose their Efficacy and make no impression on us; when they shock at any time that *superiour Engagement*, which tyes us without exception to the *Service of our God*. In this sense it is that our Saviour positively declares, *that if any man come to him, and hate not his father and his mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be his disciple*. God will not reign in a *divided Soul*; nor is it possible for us at once to *serve two Masters*; and we equally affront his *infinite Excellencies*; if we *degrade him* to the same *level* with others, or *advance others* in our Affection to the same *pitch* with him.

2dly. Our *Love of God* must be so *sincere*; as to make us chearfully lay hold upon all opportunities, of giving lively

lively Instances and Expressions of it. We must *rejoice in his presence*, and delight in his Worship; we must be glad when they say, *Let us go into his house*; and our Souls must be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, when our mouths praise him with joyful lips; his word must be dearer to us than thousands of gold and silver, and sweeter to us than the honey and the honey-comb; as the heart pants after the water brooks, so must our Souls long and thirst for God; and never find Contentment in any meaner Enjoyment, till they come to appear before the presence of God: We must by all the methods which human Frailty can make use of, endeavour to resemble our selves to this Object of our Affections; till we come to be united with him whom our Soul loves, to the Fruition of that God who is Love in its Perfection.

3dly. Our Love of God must be so fervent; as to extend its Influence farther than to himself, even to all his Relations and Dependencies. We must espouse all his Interests, make all his Concerns ours; and our Friendship or
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Enmity must be determined, according to the Indications of his *Favour* or *Displeasure*: We must entertain an affectionate Regard, for his *House*, his *Ministers*, his *Ordinances*, and every thing upon which his *Name* is called; Lord (says David) *I have loved the Habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth*: but more especially we must affect those who wear his *Livery*, and have the distinguishing Character of his *Servants* and his *Children*; thus the Psalmist professes in relation to himself, that *all his Delight was upon the Saints which are in the Earth, and upon such as excell in virtue*; and he assigns it as a necessary Qualification, of him who shall ascend into God's holy hill, that he should *make much of them which fear the Lord*: But neither must our *Disaffection* towards his *Adversaries*, be less than our *Complacency* for his *Friends* and *Favourites*; and all the *Aversions* as well as *Tendencies* of our Souls, must be acted by the impression of him their *first Mover*: According to the Example of the *Royal Prophet*, who gives this Testimony of himself, and appeals to God as a Witness

ness of the truth of it ; do *not* I hate them, O Lord, which hate thee ? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee ? Yea, I hate them with perfect hatred, I count them mine Enemies.

4thly. Our Love of God must be so constant ; as to continue the same in all Circumstances and Conditions, and to be unalterable in the several Contingences of our Lives. We must not love him so purely for our own Sakes, as to renounce our Affection to him when it thwarts our worldly Interest, or when it gives a check to some Appetite that we would indulge ; but must let it act uniformly upon all occasions, being grounded upon such motives as are of perpetual Obligation : God can never be less perfect at one time than another, since there are no degrees in things that are infinite ; we can never be less obliged to him at this Season than at that, since we are always indebted to him for all we enjoy : if he vouchsafes to afford us the light of his Countenance, and suffers us to bask in the Sun-shine of Prosperity ; we ought to

to rejoice in the good things which he imparts, and thankfully to look up to the hand that dispenses them: if it pleases him at any time to hide his face from us, and to let our Sun be overcast with the clouds of Adversity; we know that *whom he loves he rebukes and chastens*, and that *all things shall work together for good to such as fear him*: if he lays a restraint upon our craving desires, we must confess that he acts in it like an indulgent Father; who confines his children from some Enjoyments which they fancy, lest they should certainly betray them into unavoidable Destruction. Thus should our Love upon every Occasion; find arguments to support it self, without any alteration; and should resemble the Constancy and Stedfastness of its Object, in whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning.

By such a Love of God as I have been describing, we shall truly approve our selves to be *his Saints*; and may hope to partake of such desirable Advantages, as the Prophet assures us shall be the Consequences of it. But
2dly. Let

2dly. Let us consider the other part of his Exhortation, and in what manner we should *exercise* our *Christian Fortitude*. O love the Lord all ye his Saints; be of good courage, all ye that hope in him.

Fortitude is an inseparable Companion of the true Love of God, perfect Love (*says the Apostle*) *casteth out Fear*; and the practice of it consists in these two particulars; in *vigorously* encountering with such Difficulties as are *conquerable*, and *patiently* submitting to such Evils as are *insuperable*; the former has the name of *active Valour*, and the latter of *passive Valour*.

1st. Then, in order to deserve the praise of being *christianly* *couragious*, we must exert our *active Valour*, in *vigorously* encountering with such Difficulties as are *conquerable*.

Whilst all the other parts of the visible Creation, were formed by God with *dejected Countenances*, in token of *Obedience* and *Submission*; Man only
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was created with an *erected Visage*, as the plain Characteristick of *Majesty* and *Power*: And as his *outward Structure* bore these Marks of *Sovereignty*, so was his *Soul* endued with a large Stock of *Resolution*; as may fully appear, by the first couples conversing without Fear amongst those Creatures, which are now to us so terrible and frightful: It was original Guilt that made the first Breach, upon this inward Armour of the Soul; and gave at once an Entrance to the *King of Terrours*, and to all his *pale Retinue* of *Fears* and *Apprehensions*. It is justly observable that in all Languages, the Word used to express this *heroick Temper* of Mind, is derived from that which signifies *Humanity* it self; thus *אֱנוּחָה* in the Hebrew, *Ἀνδρεία* in the Greek, *Virtus* in the Latine, and *Manhood* in the English; by which the *common Consent* of *Nations* seems to imply, that it is a *Quality ingrafted* in our very *Nature*; and that the laying it aside is the *degrading* of our selves, into the rank and level of more *despicable* Creatures. But to make this our *Courage* be truly commendable, it must always be
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attended with a due measure of *Prudence*; for the *one* without the *other* is like mettle in a blind Horse, which only spurs him to Extravagances, and drives him headlong into Precipices: The *extream* of *Rashness*, tho' the more *manly* failing, yet it is equally pernicious with the *other* of *Fear*; and as *one* makes us look through a *false Perspective*, which *deceitfully* represents our dangers to us, *nearer* than the *Truth* and *larger* than the *Life*; so the *other* makes us *shut* our *Eyes* against its true *Proportion*, and to *wink* in those occasions where we have most need to be *quick-sighted*: but he whose *Courage* is well-ballanced steers evenly between both, and *weighs* *duly* the *Dimensions* of the Difficulty which he is to cope with; not to raise any terrifying *Apprehensions* of its *Greatness*; but to summon up his Powers to make an *answerable Opposition*. As a prudent Prince who is about to wage war, enquires into the number of his *Enemies Forces*; not with any intent to sue dishonourably for Peace, but to make his Levies accordingly for a suitable Resistance: So acts the Man

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of true *Christian Fortitude*; he first fathoms the danger under all its worst Appearances, and then makes all his Faculties stand carefully to their arms; as the evil he is apprehensive of thickens upon him, and seems to become more and more formidable; so does he the more forcibly strain himself to repel it, with the utmost *Vigour* and *Intention* Both of Body and Mind.

2dly. In order to deserve the praise of being *christianly courageous*, we must also exercise our *passive Valour*, in patiently submitting to such Evils as are insuperable.

When we have done all that is lawfull and possible to be done, in order to repel any *imminent Calamity*; if all our Efforts prove unsuccessfull, and we are unable to extricate ourselves out of the Net that entangles us; we have then the most difficult part of *Courage* to put in practice, by *acquiescing contentedly* under such uneasie Circumstances; and not with the restlessness of a foolish Bird, ensnaring our selves the faster by an ineffectu-

al Struggling. When we are in *Contention* for the *Prize of Victory*, the *Hopes of Conquest* and the *Warmth of Action*, keep up our *spirits* and give our *Blood a lively Motion*; and he must be very *cold and languid* in his Nature, who *kindles* not into *Courage*, upon such occasions; but when we are to *lye down* and *submit* to the *Infliction*, of those evils which we would run any *Hazard* to avoid; what an inward *Fund of Fortitude* will it necessarily require; to keep the *Heart unbroken* and the *Mind serene*, under *Accidents* so apt to *dispirit* and *deject* them? No *Courage* but that which is truly *religious*, which can consider such *Events* as the will of a *good God*, and acknowledge that he orders *every thing for the best*; which can carry the *Thoughts* into another *World*; and contemplate there the *eternal Weight of Glory*, which these *light Afflictions for a moment* are working for us; can enable us to *overcome* our troubles by *yielding* to them contentedly, and in so difficult a *Conflict to be more than Conquerers*: And yet this great example has our *Saviour* set us, and calls upon us frequently to
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imitate him in it ; he prayed indeed to his Father, that the Cup might pass from him ; he asked if his Disciples had any Weapons to defend him ; but he closed his Prayer with this humble Resignation, *not my Will (Father) but thine be done* ; and he commanded the Sword to be put into the Scabbard, when he found by all Circumstances that his Hour was come. The Speech which Joab made at the head of his Army, when he was about to engage with the Syrians and the Ammonites, has that noble mixture in it of Magnanimity and Resignation, which is required in active and in passive Fortitude ; *Be of good courage* (says he) *and let us play the Men, for our People and for the Cities of our God, and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.* If we thus prepare our selves like him, for both Circumstances of our Duty, either in acting vigorously, or suffering contentedly ; we shall give an evident Demonstration that we have our Hope in God, and may expect to share the Benefits which are consequential to it. And this leads me to the consideration of my

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3d. and last General, in which we are to examine, the *Arguments* which the Prophet makes use of to enforce his Exhortation; he advises us to love God and to be of good courage, because God will preserve the faithful, and strengthen their heart, but will plentifully reward the proud Doer.

There are three degrees of *providential Dispensations*, and all in favour of the righteous, which are visibly contained in this Prediction of the Psalmist.

1st. That God will defend the righteous under all their Calamities; the Lord will preserve the faithful.

2dly. That he will lessen their Apprehensions of them, revive their Spirits, and keep up their Courage; the Lord will strengthen their heart.

3dly. That he will remove all cause of Fear from them, by executing Judgment upon their Enemy; he will plentifully reward the proud Doer.

1st. Then,

1st. Then, we are here assured by the mouth of the *Prophet*, that God will defend the righteous under all their Calamities; *the Lord will preserve the faithful.* The whole Book of Psalms is scarce any thing else, but a collection of Hymns composed by holy Men, who had received eminent Deliverances from the hand of God: and therefore it is called in the *Hebrew* Title סֵפֶר תְּהִלֹּת the *Book of Praises*; the greatest part of them have the *royal Prophet* for their Author, who was experimentally convinced of this great Truth; and was evidently sensible that his righteous dealing, had been the occasion of his many miraculous Preservations. It would be needless to insist upon the proof of this, which the Nature of the thing puts beyond all dispute; since the *Justice*, the *Truth*, and the *Goodness* of God, engage him to deliver the good out of their troubles, or at least to comfort and sustain them under them; and whenever he fails or defers to do the former, it is certainly in order to their greater Advantage; and they will have reason to say with

holy David, it is good for me that I have been afflicted. I shall not abuse your Patience with needless Quotations; but shall single out one of the Royal Psalmist, and another of the divine Syracides, as extreamly expresse and apposite to this purpose. Let all those (says the sweet Singers of Israel, that trust in thee rejoyce, (there are the couragious that hope in God;) because thou O Lord defendest them: Let them that love thy name be joyfull in thee, (there are the Saints that loved the Lord,) for with favour thou compassest them as with a shield. Look (says the Son of Sirach) at the generations of old: Did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded? Or did any abide in his Fear, and was forsaken? But now I shew you more boldly. We are here informed farther by the Royal Psalmist; that God will lessen even the Apprehensions of the righteous, revive their Spirits, and keep up their Courage; the Lord will strengthen their heart. The Fear of a Misfortune which we are apprehensive of, is oftentimes more afflictive than the Misfortune it self; and as our Hopes do

do many times *raise* our Expectations, *higher* than can be answered by the Possession, so our *Fears* do often *magnifie* a *threatning* Evil, to a Bulk much *greater* than we find it in the Sufferance: He *dyes many Deaths* that lives in *constant Fear*, of *that Death* which can only be *once* undergone; and therefore this Strength of Spirit which God imparts to the faithful, is a most valuable Advantage in any time of distress: Till God shall think fit to deliver them out of it, nothing can be more helpfull to them than this inward Vigour; which renders them *impassive* in the midst of Sufferings, and enables them to *tire out* the Cruelty of their Oppressours: And if this can thus enliven them when *Affliction* has taken hold of them; what Vigour and Alacrity of Spirit must it impart, for the encountering with such dangers as *barely threaten* them! *The wicked may flee when no body pursues, but the righteous is bold as a Lion; he will not be afraid for any evil Tidings, for his heart standeth fast and beleiveth in the Lord.* But

3dly. We have also the *Prophet's* Word, that God will remove all cause of fear from the righteous, by executing Judgment upon their Enemy; *he will plentifully reward the proud Doer.* This Character of *proud Doers* is a general Expression, by which God describes the Adversaries of his Saints, whom he has therefore designed as the marks of his Vengeance; and tho' he may give them a long Train of Successes, till we even *grow envious* at their Prosperity; yet at length we shall perceive that *he sett's them in slippery places, from whence they fall down and come to a fearfull End.* There are several Tokens given us of this *proud Doer* in Scripture, which may lead us to guess at such a sort of Person: and the first of *them* is that he is a *Persecutor*; *the wicked in his Pride doth persecute the poor*: by the *poor* is here meant such *helpless good Men*, as are unable to defend themselves against a *powerfull Oppressour*: Wherever then we find any one, that *afflicts the righteous* for being *such*, and deals cruelly with the *godly* for their *Conscience-sake*;

sake; we may safely judge *him* to be that *proud Doer*, whom *the Lord* (we are informed) *will plentifully reward*. Another *Mark* which we have of this *proud Doer*, is his *contempt of God*, and *disrespect of his Authority*; *the ungodly is so proud that he careth not for God*: Wherever therefore we meet with any one, that *arrogates to himself any Attribute of God*, that suffers himself to be stiled *immortal* or the like, that regards not *solemn Oaths* to which *God* has been a *Witness*, but breaks through all the *Engagements* which he has made at his *Altar*; *this Man* we may well suppose to be that *proud Doer*, whom *the Lord* (we are assured) *will plentifully reward*. A third *Characteristick* of this *proud Doer*, is that he is a *Dissembler or Deceiver*; *the proud have hid a snare for me, and have spread a net by the way-side*: wherever then we observe of any person, that he *conceals ill designs under plausible Pretences*; that he *speaks of Peace having War in his Heart*; that he enters into *Covenant to serve a present turn*, and *violates it again when he thinks it for his Interest*; *this Man* we may conclude to be that
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proud Doer, whom God (we are told) will plentifully reward. And what this plentiful Reward of his may be, we have also clear Intimations in holy Writ. The Prophet Isaiah tells us of the King of Assyria, who is represented there as the great Enemy of the people of God; that he who ruled the Nations in anger, that opened not the house of his Prisoners; even he is persecuted, and none hindreth. He is abandoned by all for his former Oppressions, there is his Reward as he is a Persecutor. Again, (says the Prophet concerning the same person; how art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer! thou hast said in thy heart I will be like the most high, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; yet shalt thou be brought down unto Hell; from rivaling and making himself equal with God Almighty, he shall become viler than the meanest amongst Men; there is his Reward as he is a Contemner of God. I find not this King, (bad as he was) accused by the Prophet for Breach of Faith; and therefore we must have Recourse to other Passages,

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to find the just *Recompence* of this *Transgression*: The *Psalmist* tells us in relation to it, that *God will cut off all deceitfull lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things*; and the *Prophet Obadiah* assures proud *Edom*, that the *Pride of his heart has deceived himself*: he shall be taken then in the snare which he laid for others; there is his reward as he is a *Deceiver*. And these three *Punishments* for his *threesfold Offence*, make up the *plentifull Reward of the proud Doer*.

Thus have I led you through the three Divisions of my Text, and have shewed you, *First*, who those *Persons* are, to whom the *Royal Prophet* addresses his Exhortation, and they are the *Saints of the Lord that hope in him*; I have *secondly* considered the *subject Matter* of the Exhortation, that they should *love the Lord and be of good courage*; and *thirdly* I have weighed the *Argument* with which he enforces his Exhortation, because *the Lord will preserve the faithfull and strengthen their heart, but will plentifully reward the proud Doer*. I shall only now desire
you

you to examine your selves, whether this Address may be directed to you; whether you are conscious to *your own selves*, that *ye are the Saints of the Lord*, and *have your hope in him*; if you are not, you have no Interest in all that has been said; till you *break off your Sins by a hearty Repentance*, and turn your *Distrust* into a *modest Confidence*: but if your *Hearts* answer you with *Comfort* in this point, then *love ye the Lord*, and be of good courage; plant in your hearts that filial *Fear of him*, which is the best armour against the *Fear of Man*; and having thus secured him *upon your side*, you need not fear what man can do unto you: For then are you of the number of those *faithful ones*, whom he will *carefully preserve* in the midst of all dangers; whose *hearts he will strengthen* under all manner of Difficulties; and for whose sake, in his own determined time, he will *avenge himself* severely upon his *adversary* and *yours*; he will *pay him that he has deserved*; and *plentifully reward the proud Doer*.

Let us all heartily contribute our Endeavours to this End; and pray
that

that God would protect our *Queen*, and make her his great Instrument of our Safety and Security; that he would assist our *Councillours* with his good Spirit, and inspire our *Senatours* with *Wisdom from above*; that he would bless our *Allies* and strengthen their Hands, against the *common Enemy* of our *Liberties* and *Religion*; and let none of us think much in our several Capacities, either to open our Purses or expose our Persons; for a cause which God has visibly espoused and prospered. But above all let us qualify our selves by the *Love of God*, and by a due *Dependance* upon his *Assistance*; for the comfortable refreshings of his Goodness, and his perfecting the Work which he has begun amongst us; and then whilst those that arm against us, do *some trust in chariots* and *some in horses*; if we without stupidly neglecting what is necessary, do thus *remember the name of the Lord our God*; I question not but the happy Consequence of it will be this, *that they shall be brought down and fallen, while we shall be risen and stand upright*. Now to God the Father. &c.

Haggai

and God would protect our lives and
his great instrument of our
salvation, that he would
our consciences with his good
will and inspire our strength with
his power; that he would
his own blood and strengthen with
his Spirit the weak and lowly
of the world and bring us to
the Father and the Son, and let
us of us think much in our hearts
of our Father, either to open our hearts
to his love, for a candle
which God has visibly espoused and
which shall be for us
the our lives by the love of God
and by a true repentance upon his
mercy; for the comfortable rest
of his goodness, and his per-
fecting the work which he has begun
in our hearts; and then with those
who are against us, do some work
and some in love; if we
without finally neglecting what is
our duty, do thus remain the same
in our hearts; I question not but
the happy consequence of it will be
that they shall be brought down and
that we shall be able to resist and stand up
Now to God the Father. Amen

*Haggai the 1st. Chap. and
the 7th. Verse.*

*Thus saith the Lord of
Hosts, consider your
ways.*

HOW many *Contradictions* do we meet with in Mankind, and how *inconsistent* are we with our selves in most of our Actions! No Creature under the Sun has such *great Ends in view*; and yet none prosecutes them with so much *Carelessness* as we do: We are the *only noble Beings*, whose chief *Expectation* is in *another World*; and yet who more industrious than *we* to *intangle* our selves in *this*? It is our peculiar

culiar Priviledge to be *thinking Creatures*; and yet how few can we find that are not *thoughtless* and *inconsiderate*? We are the greatest *Self-lovers* in the Universe; and yet none are less diligent to promote their *true Interest*, none more disatisfied with *their own Company*. How unwilling are we at all times to *commune with our own Hearts*! How industriously do we avoid a *Conversation with our selves*! How do we rather divert our selves with the most trifling *Entertainments*; than we will enter upon the great and necessary Duty of *considering our Ways*! And yet this *Want of Consideration*, is a most *fatal Rock* upon which thousands have *split*, and thereby made *Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience*; it is a *dull and stupid temper* of mind, which if not removed by a timely *Application*, will infallibly lead us on to a *spiritual Lethargy*, and we shall fall into a *Sleep which will be unto death*. It exposes us *naked* to all manner of *Temptations*, and throws us *unarmed* into the midst of our *Enemies*; it gives every *Passion* the ascendant over us; and our *Judgment* which was designed

to

to curb and restrain them; throws the loose Reins upon their stubborn Necks, and suffers *it self* to be hurried wheresoever *they* will wander: Thus by *Inconsideration* we resemble our selves, to the fabulous *Centaurs* of the Ancients; the *Beast* and the *Man* are incorporated together; only with this unhappy difference on our side; that the *former* of the two runs away with the *latter*, without being at all subject to his Guidance or Direction: Since these are the sad Results of so imprudent a Management; how readily and seriously ought we all to attend, to this advice which the *Prophet* gives us from the mouth of God, *this saith the Lord of Hosts; consider your ways.*

In my following Discourse upon which Words, I shall make use of this plain and easie Method.

1st. I shall examine, *what is here meant by considering our ways.*

2dly. I shall enquire, *after what manner this Duty is to be exercised.*

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3dly. I

3dly. I shall lay down some *Inducements to the practice of it.*

1st. Then I shall examine, *what is here meant by considering our ways.*

Since this Practice is recommended by God himself, and that after so august and solemn a manner, *thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways*, we must needs be convinced that it is a matter of great moment; and it would be a Folly most gross and unaccountable, not to acquaint our selves with the true Nature of a Duty, which we find *usbered* in with such an awful *Introduction*. Let us therefore in order to its clearer Explication, take those two Terms asunder which compose it, and unravel the meaning of them separately and distinctly; By

1st. Examining, *what is to be understood by our ways.* And

2dly. Enquiring, *what is intended by considering*

I. 1st.

1st. Then

1st. Then let us examine, *what is to be understood by our ways.*

This Expression is of so large and comprehensive a Signification; that it takes in all those several Operations, of which we are capable as we are rational Creatures; whether they be *Thoughts, or Words, or Actions*: As to our *Thoughts*; the *Wise-man* assures us, *that a Man's heart deviseth his Way*; that his *inward Imaginations* being the *Source* of all his *Actions*, his *outward Ways* are *virtually* in his *Thoughts*, as the *Fountain and Principle* from whence they flow. As to our *Words*; we have the *Testimony* of the *Royal Psalmist*, that they also are couched under the *Notion* of *our Ways*; *I said I will take heed* (says he) *to my Ways, that I sin not with my Tongue*; where to offend in *Words* is positively declared, to be the *Effect* of neglecting or being *heedless* of *our Ways*. As to our *Actions*; they are particularly designed by this Expression, in almost every place where we meet with it in *Scripture*; take *one* clear Instance instead of a great many,

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many, out of the inspired Writings of the Prophet *Jeremiah*; *thy Way* (says he) *and thy Doings have procured these things unto thee*; where he makes *Ways* and *Doings* to be synonymous, and only differently to express the same thing. Thus we see the whole Scheme of our Life and Conversation, whatsoever we *think* or *speak* or *act*; are those particulars about which this Duty must be conversant, they are *those Ways* which we ought to consider: The *Ways of God*, as he himself assures us, *are not our Ways*; *his Judgments are unsearchable, and his Ways past finding out*; and therefore *these* are only to be revered and adored, or some of them to be made the Objects of our Imitation, in a proportionable Degree, and at a respectful Distance: The *Ways of inferiour Creatures* are only guided by *Sense*, or by an unaccountable *Instinct* which determines their Actions; and *they* exact at our hands but a transient Observation, such as all the works of Nature may justly challenge: But such things as are the Effects of *Reason* and *Free-will*; such as are the Results of *those two great Faculties*, which *distin-*
guish

guish Human-kind from the rest of the Creation; these are *those Ways* for which we must be *accountable*, and which therefore it is our Duty and our Interest to consider. Which leads me to the Explication of the

2d. Term, and to shew what is here meant by considering.

Consideration is a complex Duty, and is made up of several parts; it has (like the Roman Janus,) a double Face; with the one it looks backwards upon such things as are past, and with the other forwards to such as are to come: In the former it consists, in a sober Review, a due Examination, and an impartial Censure of what we have done; in the latter it implies, a prudent Foresight, a cautious Preparation of Mind, and a carefull Weighing of Matters before we enter upon them; in relation to what we have to do: in either of them, it is not a bare thinking without any farther Consequence, but such a serious Dwelling upon them as may influence our Practice: This is the full Sense and Explication, of what is here

meant by bidding us *consider*. And now having thus explained the *two Terms severally*, let us see the true Purport of them when they are *joyned together*: To *consider our Ways* then, is so to meditate upon all our *past Thoughts and Words and Actions*, as to be affected with Joy or Sorrow; by the true Judgment which we make of them, according to their Conformity or Disagreement, with the Rules of right Reason and true Religion; so to watch over our selves in the course of our *future Life*, as not to be surprised into such *Thoughts, Words or Actions*, as may be inconsistent with the Dignity of our Nature, or unworthy of the *Vocation wherewith we are called*. And thus much for the first thing proposed, namely to examine, *what is here meant by considering our Ways*. I proceed

2dly. To enquire, *after what manner this Duty is to be exercised*.

Since *Consideration* has a different way of *acting*, according to the *Diversity* of its *Objects*, which are either *things*
past

past or *things to come*; it will therefore be necessary to make a *double Scrutiny*, into the manner of our exercising this great Duty.

1st. By enquiring how we should perform it, in relation to such particulars as are *already past*. And

2dly. By examining how we should discharge it, in relation to such particulars as are *yet to come*.

1st. Then let us enquire, how we should perform this Duty of *Consideration*, in relation to such particulars as are *already past*.

And here we must *ascend* by several *Degrees*, before we come to the *Pitch* and *Perfection* of this Duty; and the *first Step* which we must take in order to it, is *Recollection*, a Work of the *Memory*, a recalling into our Mind, as far as it is possible, whatever we have *thought* or *said* or *acted*. Now this is a Work, which can be done by us but very imperfectly, if we are now first entering upon this Duty, or have

intermitted the practice of it for any long time ; we may as easily give an account of every Sand, which has run through the several Hour-glasses of our Life, as reckon up our Transgressions, which have been full as numerous : and therefore it was very well advised by some of the wisest Heathens, that we should *every night* take our selves to *task*, and run over all the passages of the *foregoing Day* ; as knowing that otherwise we must expect, but a very slight and unfaithful Account of them ; and must rather be constrained to acknowledge Faults in *general*, than be able to proceed to a *particular* Detail of them : And yet this must be done with the greatest Exactness, wherever our Remembrance can furnish us with Materials : Nor must we only reflect upon them *nakedly* and by themselves, but with their several *Excuses* or *Aggravations* ; under those *peculiar* individual *Circumstances*, which either *extenuate* or *enhance* them : Thus must we rank them all, before the Eyes of our Mind ; without concealing or over-looking, our beloved Iniquities or *bosom Transgressions*. And good God ! what a dismal Prospect must

must this be, if we look upon them impartially with the Eyes of a *Christian* and a *Penitent* ! If we look back upon our *Thoughts* ; how many loose Imaginations must be ranged in order ! How many wandring Fancies in the midst of our Devotions ! What leanings towards *Atheism* and *Infidelity* ! What inward repinings against providential Dispensations ! What Sullenness of Spirit in the midst of constant Blessings ! What Swellings of the Soul through *Pride* and *Ambition* ! What *Ulcers* and *Corruption* in it through *Envy* and *Malice* ! What a *Leprosie* overspreading it through *sensual Affections* ! If we reflect upon our *Words* ; how empty and useless will most of them appear ! How *sinful* and *provoking* are too many of them ! What a Mixture have they sometimes of *Wantonness* and *Profaness* ! How *treacherous* and *designing* have they been at other times ! What *Falsities* and *Æquivocations* have they frequently abounded with ! How have they been made use of to the vilest Ends ; to *flatter* our *Superiors*, to *scandalize* our *Equals*, and to *reproach* our *Inferiours* ! How has our Breath been wasted in *uncharitable Censures* ; and as if

if the *Poison of Asps* had been under our lips, has scattered *Infection* all about us! Nay sometimes, have we not employed that *puny Member* our Tongue, not only to asperse our *Fellow-Creatures*, but with a *gigantick Insolence* to affront our Creator; violating his Majesty with *Oaths* and *Execrations*, and as it were daring him to avenge himself by our repeated *Blasphemies*! If we revive to ourselves the memory of our *Actions*; how few of these can we account for with any *Comfort* or *Confidence*! Have we not often behaved our selves *ingrately* towards our God, *mischievously* towards our selves, and *unjustly* towards our Neighbours! Have we not stood out in an open *Defiance* against God, and a professed *Disobedience* to his righteous Laws! *Doing those things which we should not have done, and leaving those undone which we should have done, as we truly acknowledge in our general Confession*! Have we not miserably injured our selves both in *Flesh* and *Spirit*! giving up our selves to *Riot* and to *Surfeitings*, to *Intemperance* and *Incontinence*! and thereby at once *endangering* and *enfeebling*, both the *Health* of our Bodies

Bodies and the *Quiet* of our *Souls* !
Have we not practised all the little Arts
of *Cunning* and *Design*, by which we
may over-reach our innocent *Neigh-*
bour ! at once by our *Injustice* impair-
ing his *temporal*, and by our *ill Exam-*
ple his *spiritual Warfare* ! How large a
Field have I to enter upon, if I would
cursorily run over all the several Imper-
fections, which *these three Scenes of Life*
would set before us ! and how must the
view of such numerous Enormities, fill
us with Shame and *Confusion of Face* !
Especially if we consider that this *Re-*
solution, is only in order to a *second*
Branch, of the great Duty of *Considera-*
tion ; which is *Disquisition*, a Work of
the *Understanding* ; being a strict En-
quiry into the Merits of the Cause ; and
a severe Examination how far these par-
ticulars, have been in their Nature ei-
ther *culpable* or *commendable* ; for they
are not thus brought to the *Bar of Con-*
science, only to make there a *formal Ap-*
pearance, but in order to their *Tryal* and
Arraignment. Having therefore thus
endeavoured to *recall* them to our *Re-*
membrance, and as far as it is possible to
make them *present to us* again ; we must
next

next proceed to weigh them in the balance of the Sanctuary; we must compare them with the straight Rule of God's Injunctions; and try them by that Word which cries within us, *This is the Way, walk ye in it.* But alas! how little able shall we be to justify any of them, when they come to be canvassed by so impartial an Inquisition! What will become of those ungoverned Thoughts, which we never gave our selves the Trouble to restrain or regulate; when they shall be examined by God's great Command, of keeping the heart above all keepings, because out of it are the Issues both of Life and Death! How shall our words, that are either Vanity or Impiety, abide the Test of that Apostolical Canon; Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying! How shall our Actions, sinful and injurious as they are, stand the brunt of that Precept which is the Law and the Prophets; whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, even so do unto them! They will never be able to escape in the Judgement, tho' we our selves were the partial Jury; but we must deliver them up and consign them over,

over, to a *third Branch* of the great Duty of *Consideration*, which is *Determination*, another Work of the *Understanding*; a *passing Sentence* upon them according to their Deserts, and either *condemning* or *acquitting* them. And what can they deserve but a heavy *Condemnation*? When *Conscience* which is a *thousand Witnesses*, gives in its unerring *Evidence* against them! when the *positive Laws* against which they have *transgressed*, are produced and urged to confront their *disobedience*! when we have nothing to plead in their Behalf, but the *Gratification* of a *beastly Lust*, or the *Bias* and *Tendency* of an evil *Disposition*! and when they are generally aggravated by provoking *Circumstances*, being always practised against the manifold Mercies of our God, in contempt of his Authority, and the Denunciations of his Vengeance! Can we flatter our selves that we can bribe our *Understanding*, to pass a more favourable Censure upon them; by urging the *Infirmity* of our Nature, and the *Strength* of those Temptations which at any time availed us? Must we not rather be hushed into Silence, as the great *Apostle*
of

of the Gentiles was ; by God's assuring us, as he did him, *that his Grace was sufficient for us* ? We cannot certainly refuse to give Judgment against our selves, and to abhor our selves in dust and ashes ; confessing that God's Commandments are just and upright, and our Deviations from them unreasonable and inexcusable. And now when this Process is quite gone through with ; when our Memory has attached and brought back those Fugitives, which were born out of our reach by the torrent of time, and placed them as so many Prisoners before the Tribunal ; when the Understanding has tried them, and given Sentence against them, and we are sensible of the Justice and Impartiality of that Censure ; it cannot surely fail to influence the Will, to make its future Elections with greater Circumspection. And this brings me to the

2d. Part of my Enquiry ; to examine how we should discharge this Duty of Consideration, in relation to such particulars as are yet to come.

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This is the most useful part of the Duty, and such as if we discharge it with sufficient Heedfulness, will hinder us from needing to repeat the other often. For if we so watch over our *future* Life, as to manage every part of it with a due Circumspection; we shall either not need to reflect upon it afterwards, or if we do we shall remember it with Comfort and Satisfaction. This also, like the former part of the Division, requires *several things* to be practised, in order to compleat it. The *1st.* of these is *Resolution*; or a strong and serious Intention of Mind, to behave our selves *hereafter* more rationally and religiously, than we found upon Examination that we had done *heretofore*. When we have taken a sober Review, of all the Irregularities of our *past* Life; when we find nothing else to be the result of them, but Terrours of Conscience and Apprehensions of Vengeance; when we have also just tasted of that Joy and Consolation, which some few good Performances may have left behind them; we cannot sure be so stupid, so sottishly inconsiderate, as not
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to resolve against the *former*, and eagerly to endeavour after the *latter*. For can we presently think of running headlong again, into those criminal Excesses which we have *just now* condemned? Can we blindly be led away by those very Temptations, with the Smart and Shame of which we are so sensibly *affected*? It is nothing but the want of such a due *Consideration*, that can make their Attempts be frequently successful; and we need only make use of *Thought* and *Reflection*, to engage us solemnly not to be seduced by them again. Our cheif Design therefore in *looking backwards*, is that we may *walk forwards* with greater Security; and the first step that leads to the attaining this great End, is seriously *to resolve* that we will endeavour it; that we will constantly inspect into all our *Thoughts*, and suffer none of them to be tainted with Looseness or Profaness; that we will set a *watch before our mouth*, and keep the door of our lips, that nothing may pass out of them, but what is innocent to our selves and improving to others; and that we will *do* what is conformable to the good Will of God, and make *his Law* the

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the *Standard* of our *Actions* and *Performances*. If thus we settle a strong and steady *Resolution*, to be regular in every part of our *Ways* or *Conversation*; it will dispose us to practice the 2d. *Branch* of *Consideration*, (as this Duty has a Respect to those things which *are to come*,) and that is *Caution*; which consists in heartily *embracing* all such means, as are likely to *assist* us in our laudable *Designs*; and in utterly *avoiding* all such others, as may probably be a *hinderance* to our good *Intentions*. You were just now informed that it was necessary for those, who took such a *Review* of their *past Life*, as might be useful and advantageous; not only to recollect the *naked Actions*, but to reflect upon them as *cloathed* with their several *Circumstances*: Now he who meditates upon them after *this Rate*, will easily perceive by what *Means* and *Methods*, he was formerly *betrayed* into any evil course; and by what *Motives* he was *led* at any time, into the pleasant Paths of Truth and Righteousness; and by this *experience* he will be duly qualified, for *declining* those *Temptations* which *foiled* him

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heretofore, and for *embracing* those Assistances which *supported* him in his Duty. Thus if any of us have found in relation to our *Thoughts*, that Idleness has laid us open to loose Conceptions; or that the reading of such Books as are either trifling or licentious, has made the Bias of our Fancy to lean that Way; we must refrain from such pernicious and frothy Entertainments, lest they should have the same ill Effect upon our Imagination again: If, on the contrary, *Experience* has taught us, that our *Thoughts* have been then most solid and serious, when we have been commendably employed in some useful Occupation, and been most intent upon the Duties of our Calling; or that when we have turned over some Tracts of Devotion, or such as treat gravely of some improving Subject; they have been to us a *Store-house* of sober Reflections, and *out of the good Treasure of our Heart we have brought forth good things*; we must then be sure *hereafter* in order to this End, to make use of the *same means* which *before* were so successful. If any of us are convinced in respect

of our *Words*, that giving too much way to our ungoverned Passion, has raised us sometimes to an intemperate Rage, which has boiled over in *Oaths* and *Execrations*; if our too much Addiction to the things of this World, has enclined us to compass them by Lies and Falsities; if our Expectations of Favour have made us *flatter* the *great ones*, or our Sensibleness of an Injury has made us *invective* against *others*; we must then stop the *Fountains* from which such *bitter Streams* have flowed, and *watch* against those temptations which have had such fatal Consequences: If, on the other-side, a serious Contemplation of the divine Majesty, has often hindred us from daring to take *God's Name in vain*: If an Attention to the Rules of common Justice, has with-held us from imposing upon our credulous Neighbour; if the Knowledge that we *must answer for every idle Word*, has made us *curb our mouth as it were with a Bridle*; it must then be our Business by *like methods* for the *future*, to endeavour to *keep our tongue from evil, and our lips that they speak no guile*. If any of us

are sensible, in relation to our *Actions*, that the *company* of such Persons as are wicked and profligate, has vitiated and corrupted our outward *Conversations*, and lead us into the same Debaucheries and Excesses with themselves; if we find that a *rash* and *inconsiderate* way of acting, has exposed us to run blindly into the most gross Enormities; if too much *pampering* the *Body* has misled us into Sensuality, and the *Abundance* in which we indulg'd our selves *made us wax fat and kick*; we must then take great care to *avoid* all these *Occasions*, if we would not fall back into the same Corruptions again; if, on the contrary, our Memory informs us, that our *Actions* were never so innocent and inoffensive, as when we *conversed* with the good and virtuous; if our practices were then more regular and unblamable, when we duly considered before we practiced; if our Lusts were then most governable and tractable, when by Mortification and a needful Severity, we *subdued the Body and kept it under*; this must certainly oblige us to be conversant in *those* things, which have had so good an Effect before upon our
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our Performances. Thus by a due *Caution* may we be *fore-armed*, against the Assault of those Temptations which have prevailed upon us *formerly*; and may (with God's Assistance) be *more than Conquerors*, over those very Sins which did so easily beset us. And now, when we have made such a substantial Progress as this, in the great Duty of *Consideration*; we have nothing more to do to bring it to Perfection, but only to practice the 3^d. Branch of it, (as it is employed upon those things which are to come,) and that is *Deliberation*; or a prudent weighing and balancing whatever we are about, before we suffer our *Will* to be determined, either to the *choice* or *refusal* of it. Notwithstanding all the *Resolutions* which we may take, notwithstanding all the *Caution* which we may use before-hand; yet by *Rashness* and *Inadvertency* we may frustrate all these Methods, and make our *former care* become useless and ineffectual. Indeed our *Thoughts* are of so volatile a Nature, that they often insinuate themselves into our Soul, without our being able to prevent their Entrance; but since this cannot fix any

guilt upon us, without our approving of them and taking pleasure in them; we must therefore ponder upon them before we make them our own, by indulging them with any Complacency or Satisfaction: Our *Words* are formed within us, and are the Children of our Mind; and we can either stifle or give them life, according to their Demerits or their Deserts; and therefore these must be well weighed before we suffer them to take wing; since after their first Flight they are irrecoverable, and leave us to answer for whatsoever was amiss in them: Our *Actions* are perfectly in our own power, and are capable of being determined as we please to direct them; and therefore for *these* we must be strictly accountable, and ought to poize them impartially, before we reduce them into practice: For how many have been seduced by loose *Imaginations*; how many have been surprized into indecent *Expressions*; how many have been betrayed into enormous *Actions*; by not allowing themselves time to weigh one thing against another, but passing censure upon them too giddily and
pre-

precipitously ! Whereas, if they would take the pains to *deliberate*, and put the several Objects of their choice into the *Scales of Reason* ; they would not fail in the first place to give a *true Judgment* of them, nor afterwards to let that have a just *Influence* upon their *Practice*.

Thus have I gone over the *several Branches*, of the great Duty of *Consideration*, both as it has relation to such things as *are past*, and as it has a Respect to such others as *are to come* : In the former, it consists in *Recollection*, or calling back into our Remembrance our Conversation heretofore ; in *Disquisition*, or a due Enquiry into the Nature, of those things about which we have been employed ; and in *Determination*, or passing an impartial Sentence upon them, in order to their *Acquittal* or *Condemnation* : In the latter, it is exercised by *Resolution*, or a firm Design of correcting *hereafter*, whatever has been amiss *before* ; in *Caution*, or a *careful making use of all such means*, as we have found instrumental to forward us in our Duty, and *avoiding* all

such *Methods* as *with-drew* us from it; and in *Deliberation*, or a serious *weighing* of what ever we attempt, before we *close* with it or *reject* it. He who has thus discharged this Duty, in every Branch and Particular of it; has *fully* complied with the advice in my Text, and has most usefully and exactly, *considered his Ways*. I shall now proceed in the

3d And last place, *to lay down some Inducements to the practice of this Duty*, and so I shall conclude.

1st. Then, if we reflect upon the *Person* who gives us this Injunction, it will powerfully oblige us to *consider our ways*. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, *consider your ways*.

We are generally enclined to follow the Counsel, and to be guided by the Directions of those, whom we acknowledge to have a *true Kindness* for us, to be *well-qualified* for giving Advice, and able either to *promote* or *hinder* our Advantage; but where can we meet with these several *Recommendations*, in so eminent

minent a degree as in *Almighty God*? His infinite *Goodness* which he has exemplified towards us, in the *good things* of *this Life* and the *Hopes* of a *better*; are so many Arguments infallibly to convince us, that he is the most *tender* and *affectionate* of all *Friends*: His boundless *Wisdom* which can never be imposed upon, by all the Artifices of *Men* or *Devils*; must effectually assure us that we cannot act more safely, than by the *Rules* and *Precepts* of so *discerning* a *Counselor*: His unlimited *Power* by which he does whatever pleases him, in *Heaven* and in *Earth* and in all *deep places*; will most forcibly engage us to obey his *Prescriptions*, who is able to reward us eternally for our *Compliance*, or to punish us everlastingly for our *Contumacy* and *Disobedience*. Let his *Goodness* then allure us, his *Wisdom* persuade us, and his *Power* engage us; to hearken to that advice which proceeds from his own Mouth, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways.

2dly. The vast *Advantages*, which will certainly redound to us from this Practice, should heartily encline us to consider our ways.

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The Exercise of this Duty will introduce into us, a *sober* and *solid* Temper of Mind; it will repress all *Licentiousness* of *Thoughts*, all *Indecencies* of *Words*, all *Irregularity* of *Actions*; it will make us in *all Instances* behave our selves, with the commendable *Gravity* of *Men* and *Christians*; it will teach us to *husband* and *improve* our time; and not to *trifle* it away in such empty *Vanities*, as we must be forced to call our selves to a severe account for: It will make us keep our *reckoning* with God as *even* as we can, since we must infallibly *bring it to the balance*: it will hinder us from falling into gross *Offences*, by keeping us continually upon *our guard*; and will enable us to atone easily for our *Sins of Infirmary*, since it will not suffer them to be long *unrepented* of: This is the *Inference* which the *Royal Psalmist* draws from such hopefull *Premises*; *I thought* (says he) *on my Ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies; I made hast and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* Thus shall we walk here in *the light* of *God's countenance*, till we come to
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the land of everlasting life hereafter ; and arrive by the *Paths* of *Piety* and *Righteousness*, at the *Kingdom* of *Glory* and *Immortality*.

3dly. And lastly, the great *Inconveniences* which must otherwise attend us, should forcibly constrain us to *consider our Ways*.

He who gives himself up to a *careless Inconsiderateness*, can never be supposed to manage his *Conversation* as he ought ; and if at any time he should act commendably, it is owing to *Chance* rather than *Design* : But how probably must he still *wander* from the right way, who *hurries* blindly on without any *Reflection* ! Not to *make use* of ones *Reason*, is as dangerous as not to *have* it ; and it has the *Evil* of *Folly*, without the *Excuse* of it : If we fondly give Ear to the *first Sollicitors*, without ever attending to the *Merits of the Cause* ; our *Passions* and our *Appetites* will *prejudice* us in their own *Favour*, as those who have the *worst Plea* are usually most *importunate* ; unless we bring them to the *Bar of Conscience*, and try them
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by the *Maxims of Reason and Religion*; the powerful *Advocates* which they have within us, will *bribe* us to absolve them and to fall in with them: And yet those *Diseases* are the most deadly, which take away our *Sense* of them; and nothing can be a more *fatal Symptome*, that our *Souls* are *sick* even unto *Death*; than such a *stupid Unconcernedness* for what shall become of them, such a *settled Insensibility* of what is proper for their *Welfare*: For how hazardous is it, thus to *sleep* upon the *Brink* of a *Precipice*! and how dreadfully must he *awake* in *another World*, who has *closed his eyes* to all the concerns of it in *this*! Then will he bewail his want of *Consideration*, which if *seasonably* made use of had *prevented* all this *Misery*; when he shall *always reflect* upon his *former Conversation*, without any other *Effect* but the *Enhancement* of his *Torments*!

O *then*! (to make use of the *passionate Expostulation* of *Moses*) *that we were wise, that we understood this, that we would consider our latter End*! That we would *meditate* upon the *Consequences*

quences of our *Inconsideration* ! that we would *exert* our *Character*, and acquit our selves like *Men* ! and not *degrade* our selves by so *gross* a *Stupidity*, even below the *Rank* of *inferiour Creatures* ! making our selves liable to that hateful *Asperſion*, which the unerring Word of God has cast upon ſuch Persons ! *The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Aſs his maſter's Crib ; but Iſrael doth not know, my People do not conſider* ! From which ſcandalous *Imputation*, that we may all be free, let us *conſider* our ways, and *what has now been delivered*, and the *Lord* give us all a right *Underſtanding*.

To him the Father Son and Holy Ghost, be aſcribed all Honour, Power, Might, Maſteſty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. *Amen*.

F I N I S.

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